Ross Dowson archives – correspondence -- Year 1957

01_03	Document, Draft 2: **"Memorandum on the CCF"** *(corrected by RD)*
01_17	Letter to Wally and Carmel, Montreal: re area contacts and work with Stalinists, Toronto youth growth
01_24	+Letter to Reg (Bullock, Vancouver): Request for an obit on Ernie Winch (left CCFer); a BC leaflet addressed to Stalinist workers
01_27	Circular letter from SEL (RD Toronto minutes file) to Socialist Labour Party, Toronto re joint forums
02_04	Letter to Gabe (Gabriel Glazer, Montreal) re RD's tight schedule for speaking date
02_20	Letter to J. Thistle, Verdun QC attendee at RD's debate in Montreal, Marxist
02_24	Letter to Gabe (Gabriel Glazer); thanks for Montreal meeting and future possible organization in Quebec
04_14	+Letter to Reg (Bullock, Vancouver): two submissions to the paper do not make us a voice for the left in the CCF, are more organizational than political, and without a concrete transitional program while dogmatic on the necessity to work solely in the CCF ("a Rodney Young maneuver" on the BC CCF left?)
04_26	+Letter to Reg, re: next issue (of *Workers' Vanguard*) to be tight for space; the small Ontario CCF Convention; BC-NC members' opposition to running a SEL federal candidate
05_00	*+(Undated, re: June federal elections; unsigned, by a NC/PC member likely R.D.)* Document: **"The Federal Elections and the CCF:"** SEL faces challenge to participate to the best of its ability; our entry into the CCF as part of our orientation has ended; our call for a Workers' and Farmers' Government now requires our independent voice; our public organization will legitimatize our work in the CCF, a SEL candidate would be a barrier except in special conditions
06_21	Letter to Toronto SEL by RD re need to elect an NC member from Toronto branch to replace two missing members
07_18	Letter to Charlie Ross, radical unionist, New Brunswick re work in the Maritimes, propose a visit to Toronto.

08_09	Letter to Percy: re RD's short tour of S. Ontario, Stalinists and CCFers dormant
08_18	Letter to E.G.Larrabee Jr., New York, a word on poetry submitted for publication and in defense of the SWP journal *The Militant*
08_18B	Letter to George (Nasir, Vancouver); re Fryer's book on Hungary
08_18C	Letter to Percy; re SWP branch in Buffalo (their divergent view of the Hungarian Revolution)
08_28	Letter to Tim Wohlforth, New York, on his pamphlet on Schachtman, and reply to his offer to circulate *Young Socialist* in Canada
09_01	+Letter to Reg (Bullock), Bill (Whitney) and Ellaline (in Vancouver): Comrade Paul and wife propose moving to BC; their revolutionary pedigrees; the prospect of a BC bookstore
09_23	+Letter to Reg (Vancouver): Received the Murdochville article, some BC union papers using *Vanguard* articles; need info on the BC-LPP (Stalinists) for an *International Socialist Review* (SWP) article assignment
10_1	+Minutes of PC meeting: Nominations to (SWP) Trotsky school; the opposition of BC to opening a bookstore, Paul & George withdraw plans to move to BC; Report on Cochranites, the IC(FI) call for a World Congress in 1958
10_13	+Letter to Comrades R & E & B (Vancouver): CCF has so far abstained from running in a federal by-election to challenge parachuting Liberal cabinet member; we must take up opportunity or force CCF into battle; full agreement in Toronto
10_23	Document: Minutes of Meeting incl. discussion of Vancouver ultimatum with 4-point vote of confidence and welcoming discussion on CCF orientation
11_29	+A personal letter to Reg (Vancouver): Is a crisis of relations building up? Sweeping criticisms of the centre from BC, where misinformation about the CCF in the East, etc. is rife. Remove the editor now? – nobody in the East sees this as a need.
12_16	Letter to the CLC, Ottawa: 80 Workers at meeting chaired by Paddy Stanton in Toronto pass resolution that CLC immediately begin organizing unemployed workers

1957-01Jan

Memorandum on the CCF (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, predecessor to the NDP –ed.) (final draft from an original in Dec. 1956 – changes & additions in RD's handwriting –ed.)

Programatically the CCF continues to swing to the right. A high point in this process that has been going on for many years was reached at the Winnipeg national convention this summer with the formal dumping of the amorphous catch-all of pacifist, reformist, socialist views cal led the "Regina Manifesto" and the adoption of a new liberal- reformist statement of purpose.

Electorally the CCF is losing ground.

Its electoral base is shifting. While making modest inroads into the ranks of the skilled workers and the petty bourgeoisie, it is losing working class support. Many workers who in the past voted CCF are not voting at all or as in BC are voting Social Credit.

As a organised movement it continues to move to the right, in composition, and to decline. It is not the attractive force to leftward moving workers that it has been heretofore.

There is little political life in the movement. Whereas in many constituencies there were two and three clubs that met regularly, carried on educational work and in a modest reformist way participated in the day to day struggle of the workers, there are now only the constituency organizations. They have become largely electoral machines, meeting in many cases only a couple of times a year to nominate a candidate for municipal, provincial, or federal elections, and to mobilise some forces for work in an electoral campaign.

The active core of the movement are older workers who have held onto the movement, in many cases out of sheer inertia, secondary layers of the trade union bureaucracy, or petty bourgeois types attracted by the present liberal reformist program. Working class elements who, in the light of the rightward course of the movement would normally be susceptible to the influence of any socialist wing, have dropped away from the movement. Forces that the socialist wing has on occasion been able to mobilise in its struggles, suffering defeat after defeat, gaining little or no insight into the real nature of the problem, have dropped away in discouragement. There has been no new blood coming into the movement for some years now.

The movement has taken an a more homogenous character. With the industrialisation of BC and the stabilisation of the economy has come a certain conservatisation of the workers. In recent years when there has been no viable left wing in the industrial east there has been a broad genera1 leftist tendency in BC which on occasion has been mobilised into an effective force. It would appear that this broad left in BC has been dissipated or is in the process of being rapidly dissipated. Much of this left has been scattered across the province of BC in small towns and isolated communities. Many of them who came through the sectarian school of the S P of C (Socialist Party of Canada –ed.) are now advanced in years, immobile, and have become a less and less effective force in the movement.

The most demoralized strata of the CCF is the leadership itself which swings from moral exhortations of the workers to indignant moral condemnation. They no longer have any confidence in the future of the movement which they head.

No other reformist leadership has felt it necessary to publicly disassociate itself from the political pronouncements of its founding convention.... they have been traditionally content to bundle it up and shove it up in the attic, even on sundry occasions dusting it off as a museum piece. But the CCF leadership has apparently lost all confidence in itself to 1ead... anxiously adapting itself to whatever the trade union bureaucracy desires. In Vancouver for instance the CCF has given way to the Vancouver Labour Council on the conduct of municipal election activity. They willingly complied over the opposition of trade union activists, to the wish of the bureaucracy that it be freed from previous commitments of the endorsation of the CCF as labour's political arm. David Lewis, the CCF National Chairman, in a discussion of the possibilities of a new labour party formation has stated that he does not care whether the new party is the CCF or not.

It is now apparent in the light of the further decline of the CCF and the question mark that now brackets the course of political action that organised labour will take, it is necessary to examine once again our orientation to the CCF and its precise implementation.

To be sure we did not enter the CCF with any illusion that there was a viable left wing in the CCF. There was none in 1952 and there is none today. In 1952 there were broad left wing tendencies in the BC section and on a much more modest basis in Ontario. The movement was attractive to leftward moving workers. Today not only do we witness deep-going changes that make it problematical that the workers will go through a CCF experience, that the course of events will develop a broad left in the CCF which will become the base for the revolutionary vanguard party, but we witness maneuvers in the top levels of the trade union bureaucracy which bring into question the whole future of the CCF itself, as a movement.

In previous documents we developed formulas that expressed the conviction, a certainty, that the working class would flood into the CCF in the process of the developing capitalist crisis, that the struggle for a revolutionary program and a revolutionary leadership would unfold within the CCF... that the mass vanguard party would be formed in the process of struggle within the CCF through splits, unifications and splits. The inevitability of this was suggested.

It was on the basis of a thorough analysis of all our experiences, of our understanding of the level of experience and consciousness of the Canadian working class that in 1948 we oriented ourselves to the CCF and in 1952 carried out an entry. Our orientation to the CCF contained no elements of conciliationism, support or loyalty to the CCF as such.... our orientation was to the working class who we estimated had CCF illusions, illusions that the CCF was their class party which would resolve their class problems.

We at no time expressed any interest in assuring that the working class would go through a CCF experience. We estimated through all the resources at our disposal what we thought was taking place — that the CCF was the form that the labor party was taking on in Canada, and we

decided to enter in order to participate more effectively in the building of the left and the vanguard party.

We are not the captives of these formulas developed under different times and conditions. These formulas were developed at a time when our movement was attempting to meet sectarian and opportunist elements in our ranks — in the former case, forces that opposed our orientation or policy of critical support of the CCF — in the latter case forces that attempted to transform our entry into the CCF — a tactic devised to build the Trotskyist party through the CCF — into it's opposite, the liquidation of the Trotskyist party, its dissolution into the CCF.

Does the adoption of the Winnipeg Manifesto mark a qualitative change in the CCF? Now that the confused socialism of the Regina Manifesto has been removed and replaced by unadulterated liberal reformism, does the CCF cease to exist as a working class party? Do we need to fundamentally reorient ourselves — establish the independent movement?

Enge1s wrote to Bebel with regards to the adoption of the Gotha Program – "Generally the official program of a party is less important than what it actually does. But a new program is always like running up a flag publicly, and the outer world judges the party by this flag." And a little later in a letter to W. Bracke: "Fortunately the program has had better luck than it deserved. The workers, as also did the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie, read into it what ought naturally to have been in it but not what was actually in it and no one from either side has happened to examine one of these wonderful sentences for its real content. This has enabled us to keep silence over this program."

The bourgeoisie have read into the Winnipeg Manifesto not only the end of the CCF as a socialist party and as a working-class party, but as a party per se — as having any basic differences with their own parties, as having any cause for existence. What have the workers read into it?

In the 1ong run the program is decisive. But long after the historic bankruptcy or reformism, the end of capitalist expansion, reformist parties such as the British Labor Party have continued as the mass parties of the proletariat. So too with Stalinism. The historic period that laid the basis for Stalinism is gone but the French CP remains the mass party of the proletariat. Consciousness lags behind objective conditions.

Do the Canadian workers as a class consider that a qualitative change has taken place?

This is difficult to determine, for in the industrial East the CCF has never come even near winning the support of the workers as a class — only the more advanced layers of the class. Only in BC has the CCF won wide working class support. This support has been steadily declining from a high of almost 40% to 28.7% in the last provincial election. This election which took place since the adoption of the Winnipeg Manifesto registered a 2% drop but it would be brash in our opinion to credit this drop as being primari1y due to the adoption of the new manifesto, as much as the bourgeois parties and press did play up the idea that the CCF was now a free enterprise party and had lost the reason for its existence.

In so far as the workers who in the whole next period we can hope to influence with our Marxist ideas are concerned, in so far as the left is concerned, it would appear that a qualitative change took place sometime prior to Winnipeg — probab1y around the time of the resignation of Rodney Young.

But as far as can be ascertained at this time the CCF remains the political expression in Canada of the principle of independent political action by labor. It remains as heretofore an elementary and progress break from capitalist politics. In this sense our orientation adopted in 1948, developed into an entry in 1952, reaffirmed in 1954 and again last summer at Vancouver, retains its va1idity.

Our orientation to the CCF is a broad strategica1 orientation. But it is one thing to orient the forces or the vanguard to the class, and it is another thing to deploy the forces of the vanguard so that they are in a position to influence the future development of the class. For us — tiny, and with very limited resources, the left-ward moving workers must be looked upon as the class, for they are the only force that in any practical way we can hope to influence. The vanguard party needs to be built now and the forces now at its disposal need to be effectively deployed to build the party insofar as it can be built now!

The CCF is not an attractive force for leftward moving workers. The old left is now largely out of the movement. Our movement can no longer afford to submerge all its forces and energies in the CCF, or to have organizational forms only suitable to this work. The most profitable arena for work by our forces in this period and for some time to come is not the CCF at all, but amongst workers who have left the CCF, unattached workers who are not attracted to the CCF, and above all, the Stalinist Labor Progressive Party which has been in crisis since the 20th Congress Khruschchev speech. We must make tactical shifts within the framework of our broad strategical line that will allow us to take advantage of this situation.

Our movement must provide the means, and devise organisational forms that will a1low us to move in on the Stalinist LPP. Workers who are breaking from the LPP in our direction are repelled by our orientation. Those who break won't be found in the CCF, won't gravitate to the CCF and there be influenced by us, for unlike the situation in Britain and the BLP, there is no broad left wing to attract them.

We must devise means and forms that permit us to make and develop contact with workers who have left the CCF and are not at all prepared to go back into that movement for the whole next period regardless of our appeals. We must devise means and forms that permit us to make contact with leftward moving workers who are not at all attracted to the CCF, the historic role of which they already to some degree understand.

The most powerful means at our disposal to meet these opportunities is our paper. Everywhere the paper must become much more the focal point of our activities. The paper must become less a CCF house organ, the voice of the CCF left as we originally intended it to be, and must address itself more to ex-CCFers, unattached workers and particularly to LPPers.

Organizational forms must be devised and forces dep1oyed by our Vancouver comrades to permit a more effective and consistent use of the paper, to permit us to establish contact with the LPP, with unattached workers, and ex-CCFers. In Toronto where following the expulsion of our main forces from the CCF, we set up the Socialist Educational League. Through the activities of the League carried on by the expelled comrades and by the independent bookstore, these possibilities are much more easily met. We have established contact with unattached leftward moving workers. With these forces we have been able to rebuild our forces in the CCF. At the same time, in part due to the extremely limited possibilities of work in the CCF at this time, we have been able to deploy our forces around the Stalinist movements, distributing special leaflets, attending classes, carrying on personal contact work.

This does not mean the reorganization of the independent party... in Toronto where we are constituted as the League announcing its transformation (into the SEL.) and appealing for support across the country... or in Vancouver where we are in a complete entry, starting the process of a split and the lining up of our forces there with Toronto's (SEL – Socialist Education League, and later the SIC, the Socialist Information Centre in Vancouver –ed.)

Not only would we have nothing to gain through the setting up of the independent party at this time but we would seriously curtail our whole capacity to maneuver in a situation which is in extreme flux.

In Toronto the announcement of the formation of the independent party would amount to just bout that — an announcement. It would have little effect on our work. As the League, with the decline of the CCF and since the 20th congress of the CPSU, our activities have been little different than they would be if we actually were to call ourselves a party.

Nor wou1d such an action make our movement more attractive to politically developed workers, aid in recruitment, so that we could later not only call ourselves a party, but take on the activities of a party.

Such an action at this time would fly in the face of the general situation on the left. The two big barriers on our path to the formation of the mass Trotskyist party are in crisis. But this crisis is developing in a period of a further decline of the whole labor movement on this continent. There are no forces in or around either political formation, as far as we can ascertain, moving in the direction of searching for a new political party.

Our impression is that the broad left that in the past carried the struggle with the CCF brass in BC has already left the CCF in demoralization. The opposition to the Winnipeg Manifesto that is now expressing itself in the Ontario section is by and large composed of right wing social democrats who see that the movement has lost its way but are not capable of drawing the revolutionary conclusions. What leftists there are in the CCF are scattered through the clubs; there are no viable left tendencies.

At this stage the struggle in the LPP is developing in three directions. There is the Buck tendency, trying to put the clamps on the discussion and to carry on in the old Stalinist way. This tendency contains within itself forces that in the process of the struggle appear to be seriously

questioning former positions of the movement in a more or less Marxist way. There is the Salsberg tendency, crossing all the “t”s and dotting all the “i”s of the theory of peaceful coexistence and peaceful evolution to socialism, shaken by some of the truths about the USSR. It appears to be moving in the direction of reformism... possibly by way of a split or expulsions.

Between the Salsberg tendency and hundreds who are leaving the movement into political limbo, and shading off into both, are elements who do appear to be looking for some kind of alternative. But the alternative is not the SEL or our national forces calling themselves a party. We have found them reluctant to seriously study the issues at dispute. Least of all do they appear to be prepared to come to a small movement. They are looking for some kind of hodge-podge, all inclusive, all embracing, generally socialist, mass movement open to all socialists including ourselves.

To Stalinist workers who we have been attempting to influence, no matter what we called ourselves, educational league or what you will, we are the Trotskyists – a party in that it has a distinct program and tradition, and not a party, only in numbers. Whatever benefit might be claimed there would be in calling ourselves a party, to all intents and purposes we already have that benefit with Stalinists and ex-Stalinists.

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569 Yonge Street
Toronto
Jan 17, 1957

Montreal

Dear Wally and Carmel

You almost had a visitor this week end. I was all set to come dow- when I got a phone call from a Gabriel Glazer of Montreal who happened to have dropped into the bookstore last summer. I am trying to arrange the trip so that we get all that is possible out of it. This fellow Glazer has a couple of groups around him and what arrangements he can make are of some importance.

How would Febraury 7th suit you? I gather from Harry's description of your present quarters that there is no date suitable to you. I take it you dont have room to put up any star boarders. If that is so perhaps you can keep in mind some cheap but clean hotel. I may well stay for a week.

We hope to be able to make some sort of contact with the hundreds of people who have left the Quebec section of the LPP. A couple of months ago I dropped a line to Gui Caron offering to open the pages of our paper to him. Murray dropped into the store a while back. It seems that Jean-Marie Bedard was in Toronto and told Murray that Caron received our letter and was going to reply to it. He never did however. But generally I would take it that his reaction was not unfavorable. According to a letter in the latest issue of the Stalinist "theoretical" journal "ational Affaires Monthly over 200 members of the LPP have walked away. A chap we know who has connections in the LPP says that it is double that--that they are supposed to have 700 members and that 400 have left and more will be leaving the minute the April national LPP convention is over.

So we hope to make contact with Stalinists. We dont have too many names and addresses but we hope that some of those we do have will lead us to others. I suppose worst comes to the worst we will have to ferret around the UJPO, see if we can make contacts through the needle trade unions and what you will.

This fellow Galzer is a law student at McGill. He came to Toronto during the summer, he has a part time job as a railwayman. He has been around a quasi Stalinist group called the Sweezyites in New York. They publish a periodical called Monthly Review. But I gather he feels quite close to us. It appears that he has a gorup of petty bourgeois intellectuals around him who are searching and examining all ideas. There is also a campus socialist group he is active in. We are hoping that a couple of meetings of a modest character can be arranged...for the defeated but unbowed mayoralty candidate. Then there are a coulevof other people in the Montreal area that we want to see about funds. We figure that at worst it will almost pay for itself financially. And should we make contact with Caron or others who knows where we will be able to go.

So-----Glazer suggests I try to get down on Thursday nights for his gathering. Saturday and Sunday are important to call on people---and depending how it goes we might stay 4 5 or over until the next week end. Can you think of anyway that you could in the meantime find some names and addresses, leads of any kind.

not that I think it is probable that you can---just possible.

Everyone here is quite busy. Pat will be here shortly. She is drafting up an outline for a new series of classes we are planning. I dont know if it is too practical but everyone else seems to think so and is enthusiastic. We are planning a series on basic economics for Friday nights, enrollment and all. Then we are still carrying our regular Sunday night forums but we are putting them in a sries form too.

Last night the youth group gang was down here working on their paper. The last meeting of the youth group was a great success--12 turned out. We did have some doubts about our willingness to carry this group on in the light of our other commitments but it seems to be blossoming out now. They are putting out a mimeographed paper which they are finding to be a big job than they thought. Ernie is editting it. All in all it is a good experiende. Betchley who used to be in Montreal, his folks were active LPPers there, seems to be coming closer to us as we are working more together.

We have some other good contacts coming around--primarily due to Ernie' good work. If we dont watch out we Canadians may shortly be outnumbered by D.P.'s from Ireland and England. Of course that wont be bad as long as they let Canadians join in the struggle for socialism here.

Vern has had a new attack with his ulcers and has been compelled to ask for a three months leave of absence. Anne must be under considerable strain these days as her father has been dying for the past three weeks--he probably died last night. However as you know women are the stronger sex and she is an amazing member of her species. Jim is not working yet althoug his membership is in for the stationery engineers. Jerry has really taken over the bookstore. I feel like an outsider when I pass through it. Allen is giving the educational tonight--the first one he has ever given--on the class nature of the Soviet state. Allen? (Harris)

How did you like the last issue of the Vanguard. I hope you pick up a copy from your mothers bundle. Do you want us to send you a copy to the above address or perhaps as small bundle? Really extended ourselves with the last issue on Hungary. But of course this is the most important event since the Russian and Chinese Revolutions. We ran off several hundred copies of the insert which we think is pretty well self-sustaining, for future distributions. Of course the whole thing cost us considerable more money than the regular issue but if we cant do it right after a successful financial drive I guess we never could. We have some important meetings to distribute this coming two weeks.

However I think I will close off now---after all it will be only a few weeks and I will be seeing you both--and Joyce.

warmest regards

Ross

Jan 24, 1957

Dear Reg;

Received your note along with Malcolm's article. this morning. Twenty four hours earlier I had written Lillian about this in an eclosure with other itmes. Very very prompt.

I also raised the idea of someone submitting a short item on Arnie Winch. I would take it that we look upon him in some sense as ours. A one and a half to two page item mentioning his Marxist record, his opposition to the dropping of the Regina Manifesto in 1950, possibly even better material would be an addition to the paper. Could you get it off to us in a couple of days?

Received about 6 hours ago a note from Bill enclosing the mimeographed leaflet TOWARDS A NEW UNDERSTANDING. Very good. Bill wants to know by air mail whether we want copies of this leaflet--I take it in bulk quantity. Off hand without raising it to the branch it seems to me that it is not too useful to us. We are utilizing the paper tonight at the Tribune readers conference. We dont have any comrades in shops where the LPP has influence or had influence other than Amalgamated Electric and our comrade ~~thare~~ is quite new there. Would you send us about a dozen copies --that should be sufficient. I would like to send copies to various comrades scattered across the country and we could use a couple in Amalgamated.

We could use the internal LPP document that Bill mentions as coming off on the week-end. I think we should do a mailing to every Stalinist name we have...then too we would probably want to distribute it to any LPP meeting that takes place in the Toronto area in the near future. I would think that we could use at least three hundred copies of the internal LPP document.

Will take up your lengthy letter this week-end I hope. We have a document down here on our orientation .I will try to polish that up to for circulation at large. There have been preliminary discussions here

warmest regards

Ross

Ross

THE SOCIALIST EDUCATIONAL LEAGUE
569 YONGE ST.,
TORONTO.
JANUARY 27th 1957 WA 3-5174

THE SOCIALIST LABOUR PARTY.
TORONTO.

Dear Comrades,

It would appear that our two organisations are the only ones in the Toronto area that are conducting public forums in the interest of clarifying for the working people the path to a Socialist Canada.

We are of the opinion that it would not only be to our mutual benefit but to the benefit of those Toronto workers interested in Socialism if we could arrange a forum where speakers from our organisations could develop their viewpoint on a topic of common interest.

We would be happy to strike off a person or a committee to meet with representatives of your party to discuss the topic and other details of arrangment.

Looking forward to hearing from you at the earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

Jerry Houle,
SEL organiser.

February 4, 1957

Dear Gabe;

Very happy to receive your note this morning—it has forced me to sit down to wrote you this note—something I should have done somewhile back.

Glad to read that you are going to such efforts to make my trip really worthwhile. The idea of the debate with David McCord Wright is an excellent one. There is only one little matter of the date. A few days ago I received a nice letter from Willmdt On behalf of the Quebec NFLY he has invited me to speak to them. He suggested two dates and I have already written him a reply accepting an engagement for Tuesday night February 12 at 8.p.m.——the exact time that you are trying to arragne the debate with Wright. Of course I am already committed to the NFLY and can hardly ask them to make any other arrangement. So I am afraid that unless some other night could be arranged the Wright debate could not come off.

I will make every effort to be in Montreal in time for your meeting of the 7th. I have just spoken to our printer. He stalled me off towards the end of last week due to pressure of other work..now he tells me that they are having trouble with their one linotype. I expect to get a batch of proofs this (Monday) afternoon so I can get around to laying out etc. But if we get the breaks we should come off the presses by Wednesday night or Thursday morning. This is the only matter that could possibly hold me up. I must get the paper away before leaving. I will wire you Thursday as to the train and any other pertinent details.

Should you be able to re-arrange the date of the debate with Wright and feel forced to settle the subject of the debate prior to my arrival I would appreciate it if you could drop me a line as to the subject.

looking forward to seeing you

socialist greetings

Ross Dowson

Feb 20, 1957

J Thistle
Verdun, Que.

Dear Jim;

I thought that I should send along your receipt for the subscription to the International Socialist Review. After all it is a quarterly. On this basis it always seems to me that it is never going to come out---so you might shortly begin to wonder if I perhaps forgot to send the subscription on. I hope you find this magazine of real help to you in your participation in the struggle for a socialist Canada. Of course some of the articles are not exactly easy reading---the one on Fuerbach for instance. However neither is Marx's CAPITAL or Lenin's Materialism and Empirior-Criticism. Nonetheless anyone who wants to playan intelligent role ni in the struggle must attempt to get a grounding in these works. If I can in anyway be of any help to you in this do not hesitate to drop me a line. Mail isn't the best way to carry on a conversation but until I manage to get down to Montreal again or you manage to get to Toronto it will have to do.

For instance it is important that you should attempt to get a grounding in Marxist philosophy which the Fuerback article deals with. We have a very fine outline here in the store called an introduction to Dialectical Materialism by Wm. F. Warde. We had a study class on it last year and it was highly successful. This fellow Warde is an excellent popularizer of abstract ideas. I am enclosing a copy of a magazine which came into the store when I was visiting you comrades which contains an article by him. This article dealing with the law of combines and uneven development will show you how an effective popularizer he is of somewhat complex matters.

I hope you have taken time out to go over thevfew back issues of the Vanguard that I passed around the meeting. The work that is going in to putting out and circulating the Vanguard is the most important work being done in Canada in my opinion. With the Vanguard we are attempting to interpret in a meaning ful way and to apply our socialist ideas to the problems confronting the workers of Canada. Of course it is not exactly a popular paper, like the Canadian Tribune or the CCF Sask Commonwealth---issue after issue of which come out without even so much as mentioning the word socialism not to speak of applying ~~xxxxxx~~socialist ideas, class struggle concepts in a meaningful way. With the Vanguard we are attempting at this stage not to move masses, not to agitate---the times are not ripe for this right now..but to propagandize---to pull together the more advanced elements in the Canadian left, to hammer out a common approach to the main issuesthat now and in the future will confront the working class so that we will have the forces when the times really are ripe to play an effective role with our ideas. We are always anxious to know the opinion of active socialists .

The truth ,the whole truth and nothing but the truth as you see it. I am sur that there are lots of ways that the paper could be made more effective.

I meant to have a few words with you after the deabte with McCord Wright. However a couple of red-hot Tories collared me and of course I was never one to retreat before a fight. By the time the discussion with them had wound to an end you had disappeared as had Bill and the rest. Gabe Glazer and a couple of other fellows took me off to a tavern were we talked about the possibilities of organizing a Vanguard Discussion Group or a Socialist Educational League until rather late. The next day I managed to contact Gui Caron went to see some trade union lefists who were unfortunately out of town --down to Quebec for the unification of the two Quebec union centers--and then I took the train for Toronto. There was lots more I could have done while there but unfortunately I had no transportation and the city is widely scattered. Besides it costs a lot of money --a lot for people like us-to hang around

I must say it was a real pleasure to meet you and the excellent group to which you belong. The comrade-liness, the warmth of your reception was a new experience for me---one we are going to have much more often in the future I am sure.

with socialist greetings

Ross Dowson

569 Yonge, Toronto
February 24, 1957

(Jack?) Layton

Dear Gabe;

This is just a short note---I really havent time to write you about the many things that I should---but if I do not write you something to day it will probably be another week and a half or two before I can get to the typewriter for such purposes.

First I would like to thank you for your efforts that made the trip to Montrea so all-around profitable. It certainly surpassed all my expectations. You see I have had some little experience moving in on a strange city where you have only an assortment of names and addresses at hand--- many of which turn out to be duds, impossible to contact etc. We had this experience many times during the cross-country tour last summer. The places where it was most important that we establish contact, the population concentrations, the seat of industry, always turned out to be the hardest to work in. No one knows anyone else,for instance. In small towns one lead would lead to another.

Thanks to you, the many doors that you opened,I never had one spare moment. You know I took a couple of pamphlets along with me planning to write up a couple of reveiws for the paper. I never had the opportunity to open the cover

It was good to meet the various persons in your group, it was a real experience to meet Wilmott and his group and I hope that I was of some value to o ur common cause in the debate with McCord Wright.

I haven't mailed you the internal material on the Soviet state yet---it will take me a little time to go through the piles of Internal Bulletins to locate the more important material. Possibly you could find time in the next while to read the LT pamphlet titled THE CLASS NATURE OF THE SOVIET STATEA and REVOLUTION BETRAYED---having done that you might give me a more precise pictisme of what you want. For instance a group called the Johnson -Forrest group has published many bulletins advancing their view that Russai is state capitalist which unlike others they attempt to do within the general framework of orthodox Marxism. Did Alex bring the copies of Labour Review that I sent down to him for the group along with the Militants containing the review of the Deutcher book. I took the liberty of sending along five which I suggested he sell becuase I thought this issue would be all the more interesting with its review of the Strachey book that the group is studying.

Layton dropped in last Monday so I managed after all to place in his hands a couple of items which may stimulate him to do all the more an effective job at the McGill club. I loaned him the main chapters of LT's Literature and Revolution and sold him a compendium of Marx and Engels' notes and comments on Literature and Art. He sold us a few copies of The Long Pea-Shooter. A friend of mine who has in my opinion some genuine poetic talent will be reading this over---with the idea possibly of writing a short review for a subsequent issue of the Vanguard. Did I tell you that the literature agent of the ex-NFLY group offered to handle any material that I would care to send down there. I started him off with ten copies of Basil Davidson's What Really Happened in Hungary and a suggested list of novels that I would get him which would be of much more interest to socialist youth than William Blake's poetry, and Somerset Maugham's sophisticated tales---Fontamara by Ignazio Silone, Man's Fate by Malraux,etc.

I do not know how you feel about the week's work. In my opinion we achieved pretty much all that could be achieved. First --a good personal contact was established Second-some profitable discussions were held. Third--some important literature was circulated--all of which will be food for future thought. All these people, the four persons of the Gagnon group, your group, and particularly the youth group are in the midst of some very serious discussions. The League has now entered into their discussions and better still, literature that puts things much better than you or I is in their hands for them to mull over.

I do not think we could hafe possibly expected to achieve more. The Gagnon group has yet to go through the LPP national convention. The youth group has yet to go through its convention experience...and yourgroup which is the most heterogeneous it seems to me has to go through more experiences beofre it could do more than it appears to be doing now.

At the youth group meeting Bill Wilmott who gave me an extremely fine introduction , after my talk asked one simple question; Is the Socialist Educational League the Canadian Trotskyist movement? I gafe him anx one word answer,Yes. I do not know what was behind his question--I am dropping him a line of thanks, possibly we will be able to commence a correspondence--at anyrate he promised to see me here during the NFLY convention

I of course would like to see a Socialist Educational League a Montreal Trotskyist group organized in Montreal. I do not know that that is at all possible.at this time. I would like to see a Vanguard Discussion Circle organized-this is perhaps more possible at this time. When at Langley Prairie on the Fraser River Delta last Fall we made contact with about 12 CCF Leftists who following the BC election campaign were fed up to the teeth with the CCF. They had all been Vanguard readers for sometime, several of them active sub getters for the paper. While we were there they decided to constitute themselves as a Vanguard Discussion Circle--which would meet at least once a month to discuss the paper. We have published a couple of articles from them. We have not reported this development in the paper as some lefists with whom we are in contact in Vancouver we of the ppinion that these comrades should remain in the CCF at this time and join with them in the fight in that organization which they are of the ppinion has not yet exhausted its possibilities. This group is discussing its tactical orientation and rah er than put the finger on them for the right wing bureaucracy which has quite a witch-hunt record we have kept our peace. Now the Rodney Young attempt to build himself a political machine so that he can run again for the seat that he once held in the federal house has intervened in the situation--but I do not know to what effect as yet.

Any moves of this sort in the Montreal area lie in the future. Unfortunately we did not have the opportunity to have a detailed discussion as to how you see things. Nonetheless however either you or I would like to see things develop..another outlook of great importance in this atmosphere of political discussion and regroupment has been introduced. And as they say,ideas have their own logic, often grwoing far beyond and indifferent directions than those who plant them wish.

I am looking forward to a visit here from you as soon as you get some of your exams cleared away and can arrange a trip with the RR. I suppose you have taken time out to study the SWP's statement on regroupment

with socialist greetings

Ross Dowson

April 14, 1957
Toronto

Malcolm (Bruce)

Dear Reg;

Here at last are some comments on the last two submissions to the paper. I had originally intended to comment on the D. Randall contribution but now we have carried the Peter Morrisson contribution and there are a few things that I want to say about it also.

I do not know how you want to handle these comments. I gather Peter Morrisson is yours truly and that Randall is Malcolm. Certainly both should be acquainted with this note. Then there is the fact that the comments are highly editorial, of importance to us politically, so it might well be made the business of the NC comrades there next time they meet. I leave this in your hands.

Now to take up the Morrisson article. The writer is obviously a powerful stylist, very effective writing. But after reading it through I asked myself among other questions--to whom is this article addressed? What is it attempting to do?

In my opinion what we wanted for the last issue--the last issue before the BC CCF convention was an article outlining the tasks before this convention, particularly outlining the tasks confronting the delegates who could be influenced in our direction. Such an article would in my opinion be quite concrete. As for instance the articles that the Militant carried last issue just prior to the UAW convention. It would take up the practical problems confronting the convention--it would say what it thought were the matters that the delegates had to take a stand on.

For instance one of the big issues would be the Winnipeg Manifesto--I think There are no doubt many resolutions on this question. Then there is the H. Bomb testing which is really drawing lines in the Br Labor Party. There are no doubt many immediate matters of direct concern to BC workers which would allow us to develop a clear class line on. I would gather that we have a good idea what resolutions are already up before some of the main clubs for submission to the delegates at the convention. The article would make us the voice of the CCF left which we have all along desired to be.
This article doesn't have any of this type of material in it.

I would say that it is not addressed to the delegates about to attend the convention--and not even to the more developed politicals in the BC section --nor even to people now in the CCF. It seems to be to be addressed the Young group or to persons who we think might tend to be influenced by it.

I see this article as a highly editorialized defence of our CCF orientation--addressed to persons who are developing doubts about the course of the CCF or persons who have already come to conclusions contrary to our CCF orientation. Since I do not think that this was our purposes I will not say much about the suitability of the article in this respect--except that it would appear to be much too late and even here much too vague and general.

The article poses three tasks--out with the present leadership, take a socialist lead, join forces with the unions and famr organizations. Here in the East the present right wing leadership, the bureaucracy is xhxix not in anyway shape or form standing in the way of the party not only linking itself up with the famers and the unions xxxx

The line of this article can be used against us, I feel. It tends to open the door to opportunism--to the concept that it is necessary to remain in what are called the mass movements under any and all circumstances. That we cant commence the task of building the mass revolutionary party until such circumstances arise that guarantee from its commencement that it is a mass party. I am sure that this tendency cost our American party some worthwhile material when it came time to leave what was still a much bigger body than the Appeal group and with a long and radical tradition (THE Socialist Party). It no doubt stood in our way when in 1946 quite correctly on the basis of all the data at our disposal we went about organizing the small independent Revolutionary Workers Party. The fact that Stalinism contrary to our expectation proved able to divert the post war revolutionary upsurge and capitalism proved able to consolidate itself in France Italy ,etc.does not make our action of organizing the independent party erroneous.

Of course the workers do need their "pure" socialist party, it is desirable that circumstances develop that would make its entry on the scene as a mass one. Now is just not the time, that's all.

The Young maneuver presents us with a difficult problem. Even more so now that he hasn't launched in a formal sense a new socialist party but a SOCIALIST COMMITTEE FOR THE ORGANIZATION OF A LABOR PARTY. This gives him a nonsectarian appearance. I suppose his line is that the CCF is not going to be the Canadian mass labor party. He may not be wrong in this despite the recent OFL endorsation. The coming election will tell us more about this. At anyrate we have no vested interest in assuring that it be the CCF, or in insisting that it must be the CCF. This just look that way--that's all ...all signs point to this.

As a party of course we must act even though there may be doubts about the exact line of march. But as a paper, and as individuals in contact with workers who are through with the CCF in that they have found that it is not the party that is going to establish a socialist America I do not think that we should insist so much--insist that it must be the CCF and that everyone must accept this. I am afraid we may be closing the door to some of the persons who are actually closest to us.

I am inclined to think that a situation such as this compels us to give more of our real position. That the CCF will never bring socialism to Canada--not just the type of leaders it has but the nature of this party and the nature of its program---it is a reformist party when the workers need a revolutionary party---but that the revolutionary party is going to come out of the experiences in the CCF.

Or maybe we should approcah the question in another way---perhaps by doing a job on this committee which really is a party in that it considers all other party's now in existence "do not fill the needs of the wage workers." But is a party which hasn't yet made any analysis of any of these parties --the programs of these party's. A party which suggests that workers in all other party's should give up their organizational?? prejudices and come into this all-inclusive socialist stew. Young is working it all ways isn't he.

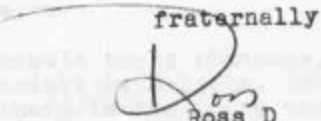
I am not too satisfied with these comments. What is needed on a matter like this is a discussion. In the process of which I could come out with some positive suggestions and which would readily remove the impressions that I feel the article may tend to leave in some workers' minds.

Incidently, why the quotation marks around Socialist. This could be interpreted to mean that the author doesn't think we need a socialist party--just a mass party. That of course is the argument of the David Lewis'

I imagine you mean it a jibe at the program of the new party which is not socialist but you do not have the time to take this up. I would have been inclined from the general ine of the article to have put the quotes around party

Will write on other matters as soon as possible

fraternally



April 26, 1957

(Malcolm) Bruce

Dear Reg;

Had our editorial meeting on Tuesday and almost forgot to write you this note.

I read the carbon copy of my letter to you and Malcolm to the edit meeting and would be pleased if you can find time to drop a reply which of course I would read to the comrades who attend the edit meetings. Of course the letter was read and accepted only as information--although there was general agreement with the comments about the article on the CCF--nothing very concrete on the comments re the Young article. Bruce however asked for the copy to read over at his leisure.

We have lined up the coming issue. It is going to be a tight one. I do not know if you have anything in mind but we would like a short article on the just past BC CCF convention. We plan to devote about 6 pages to cover both the BC and the Ontario convention.....giving three a piece. I would think that the three page article you send in or have someone send in would cover the highlights with editorial evaluation. We had a delegate at the Ontario convention--several of the comrades moved in and around all the open sessions. Small attendance, the newly affiliated De Havilland local had only one delegate. Mostly used as an opportunity to hit the press for the coming federal election. A little blow-up at the end lead by a chap we are in close contact with from Hamilton --but all in all marking the further decline of the movement. A more important meting will be taking place on May 8th which we will be unable to cover this issue--the unions are gathering to discuss their participation. It looks like they will be trying to concentrate their forces in about 5 riding where the CCF supposedly has a chance to get elected. Important pressures developing to turn the CCF from a national party attempting to take office into a pressure force--and of course it's just that now programmatically.

In a recent letter to me Ellaline gave me to understand that in advance of the vote here in Toronto asking NC permission to proceed with the running of one candidate in the federal election that I was to inform the branch what I am already to assume is the NC position of opposition to running a candidate. I wrote her to the effect that I thought that this would be highly incorrect---that the branch should proceed with its discussion take a vote and then be informed of the NC's position. Since writing this note to Ellaline I have learned--that you are already in contact with Bruce, that you have informed him that the NC majority is opposed---and that he is already informing comrades with whom he is in contact of all this.

Of course I will now inform the branch at its next meeting that the three West Coast NC members

have already signified their opposition to the running of a candidate. I understand that Bruce is also informing comrades that either you or all three West Coast comrades endorse his document which of course goes much further than just deal with this specific matter of candidates xxx. In my opinion this document stands in diametrical opposition to the Memorandum on the CCF which I gather from your "C minutes you merely filed

Perhaps since it is going around that you endorse his document you might drop me a note as to whether this is so or notxx

with socialist greetings

Ross

Ross

The sooner you could send in the CC Article the better — our discussion here is taking up much time

"THE FEDERAL ELECTION AND THE CCF" May or early 1957

With a federal election due in June, the Socialist Educational League faces the task of participating in the campaign in the most fruitful possible manner. Socialists have never looked upon elections just as a race for votes as the capitalist parties and reformists in the CCF do. The SEL, the organized conscious socialists in Canada, looks upon this campaign, as all elections, as an opportunity to advance, in the most effective way possible, our objective, the overthrow of capitalism. An election, even in a period of apathy and decline of the labor movement such as today, is a time of increased political interest among the population. We must take advantage of this fact.

It is impermissable for socialists to say that there is nothing to be done, that we must just sit back and abstain from work in the election. The question to be answered by the SEL is how we can most gainfully exploit the election campaign to advance the immediate tasks placed before the league by objective conditions?

The main purpose of this document is to define concretely our present tasks and perspectives, and thereby most effectively advance our ultimate objective, the building of a mass revolutionary party to achieve socialism. Since orientation is the framework of work at any given time, it is necessary to define the present orientation of the SEL before proceeding to our election policy.

"OUR CCF ORIENTATION"

The framework of our work at the present time is that of a revolutionary socialist league oriented to the working class as it is. More precisely, to the advanced workers who have already broken with capitalist politics. Concretely this means for the most part workers who at this stage support the CCF as their class party.

Our orientation was never based in the past, and is not based now, on any illusions that the CCF was a socialist party or was likely to become transformed into a vehicle for the socialist revolution in Canada. Our orientation is simply a recognition of the fact that the CCF is an elementary break from capitalist politics, supported by the advanced workers of Canada. In 1954, we restated our reasons for entry; "that the mass Trotskyist party, the party of the proletarian revolution, would develop in its next stages through the CCF. Our entry into the CCF had two basic premises: 1) the weakness and isolation of the independent party, 2) recognition that the course of development of the masses is through the CCF."

There was never any suggestion of political conciliation with the reformist leadership of the CCF in our entry. Our support is critical; we continue to present our socialist views to the advanced workers who support the CCF in a challenge to the reactionary policies of the present leadership. The SEL is organized around our revolutionary program, which is in irreconcilable antagonism to reformism. A change in orientation for socialists is a change in the arena of conflict. The choice of the battleground at any given time is of fundamental importance, since the future development of the class struggle depends on the effectiveness of the socialist vanguard to intervene. A false move in the field of orientation can have extremely damaging effects on our ability to extend our influence among the working class, both at the present and in the future.

In 1945, we had hoped that the post-war revolutionary upsurge would result in the advanced workers of Canada deserting the CCF, by-passing the reformist stages in their development of political consciousness and move directly to the recognition of the need for a revolutionary vanguard party. We assessed that the advanced workers would desert the CCF as the party became incapable of giving expression of their demands and that the CCF would retain only the more conservative

and backward elements of the class. On the basis of this expectation, the Trotskyists organized the framework of a new revolutionary party, thereby challenging the CCF for the adherence of these advanced workers. This estimation of the course of development proved erroneous.

The announcement of the formation of a revolutionary party amounted to just about that, an announcement. The CCF retained the adherence not only of the majority of the class (those who had at all broken from capitalist politics, that is) which was to be expected. They also retained the support of the advanced workers, the militants and the majority of the socialist elements. The Revolutionary Workers Party was completely cut off from influencing the advanced workers. With the subsequent ebb in the labor movement and the growth of the conservative mood which has lasted until today, the grip of the CCF on the advanced workers strengthened and our isolation in the RWP deepened.

With a subsequent orientation to the CCF and the dissolution of the RWP, the Canadian socialist vanguard, which the SEL now represents began the long grind to overcome its isolation, and reintegrate itself into the working class movement as it really exists. We have not gained any greatly increased support for our ideas because of the passivity of the class struggle in Canada, although to a modest degree we have made gains. But we have made great gains along the road of becoming a part, although a small minority at present (and inevitably so), of the Canadian labor movement. By our unconditional support to the aim of the advanced workers of Canada, a workers and farmers government, generally, support of the CCF, our irreconcilable differences with the reformist leadership of the CLC and the CCF are presented within the framework of the general level of consciousness of the class; the framework of support, although critical of the leadership to the CCF.

Any course which leads towards a break with this orientation in the present situation of decline of the labor movement can lead only to our being cut off from any possibility of influencing the course of development of the class struggle in Canada. To counterpose ourselves to the CCF party as such in any way would amount to voluntary self-isolation. We would appear to the advanced workers not as a socialist minority in the labor movement, but would strengthen the views that they had of us in the RWP days, that we were a small sect outside of the real processes of the labor movement. The tasks of the SEL are to publicize widely our program, to reach and organize in our vanguard league those isolated individuals who are moving in our direction, and to integrate our forces in the real movement. Not to counterpose ourselves as an independent force against other tendencies of the labor movement, but to fight for our ideas within the framework which at present represents the level of development of the class.

The Communist parties after the first world war were formed when the advanced elements of the class had come to the conclusion that the old parties were no longer adequate instruments for their demands. They were forged in the process of struggle with the reformist misleaders of the labor movement. The mass revolutionary party in Canada will be formed by a process of "splits, expulsions, unifications", by a process of struggle, as we stated in previous documents. For a small propaganda group such as ourselves to act like a party, to challenge the existing organizations without a base in the advanced workers, would not be revolutionary optimism, would not represent confidence in the building of a vanguard. It would represent adventurism, a rejection of the dialectical processes necessary for the building of a mass revolutionary party to achieve socialism.

WHAT DID THE FORMATION OF THE SEL MEAN?

A year and a half ago, after a mass expulsion of our forces from the Ontario CCF we organized ourselves as a public organization, the Socialist Educational League, and began publishing the Vanguard. The immediate impulsion for this change in form of our organization, from a nameless semi-underground faction in the CCF, to a defined public body, was the expulsion of our most experienced people from membership in the Ontario CCF. We stated, just prior to the formation of the league, that we must "step up our political activity in the form of a variety of independent activities which will have the character not of [illegible] an opponent political party in the eyes of worker-militants or serious socialist elements in the CCF, but rather the character of a left faction which has been expelled from the CCF but wants to get back in." This form of independent activity which the League and the Vanguard have realized would have become a more and more pressing necessity whether our forces had been expelled from the mass movement or not. Our lack of some sort of formal public organizational structure and a paper which expressed our socialist program and positions on national and international events were not due to our orientation to the CCF. Such self-imposed restrictions were temporary and designed only to facilitate the integration of our forces into the party in the face of dangers presented by the witch-hunt minded leadership. In fact, our failure to have a public vehicle to present us as we really are, actually aided the CCF leadership to smear us as an organization alien to the Canadian labor movement and the CCF. Defence of ourselves and our ideas, particularly at the time of the expulsions, was made more difficult due to our anonymous character.

The SEL and the Worker's Vanguard were launched to meet these problems, a paper to express our socialist program, and a public form of organisation to aid in recruitment to the movement. The move was never intended in any way as a step along the road to an independent party, to a break with the CCF. On the contrary, they were formed to facilitate and make our political work more effective within the framework of support and entry into the CCF. That the Vanguard and the League do not exist within the formal framework of the CCF, and that our members in the CCF must remain anonymous is none of our doing. It is a result of the low level of the present membership of the CCF and the witch-hunting policies of the leadership. To the advanced workers and socialists whom we hope to influence in this period, there is no contradiction in the existence of a league of revolutionary socialists within the framework of critical support of the CCF, so long as our opposition to the leadership of the mass movement does not take on the character of an opponent political party. Serious socialists both inside and outside the CCF will consider the League and the Vanguard as indispensable tools in the struggle against reformism.

The ideas of revolutionary socialism have to be expressed and heard as widely as possible, whether in times of upsurge or decline in the labor movement, whether through the voice of a new revolutionary party or through the voice of the smallest of minorities such as ourselves within existing mass organizations. We cannot confine ourselves entirely to appealing to elements now within the formal organization of the CCF. We have never viewed work in CCF clubs as adequate for our purposes. For years the CCF has been declining as an arena of political controversy. With the continued swing to the right by the opportunist leadership of the party, political life in the movement has been stagnating. Socialists have been leaving the movement in disgust. We must attempt to reach and influence those among them who have not become too demoralized by their experience in the CCF to respond. Many advanced workers, developing socialist consciousness, are not attracted to the CCF because of its adaptation to the status quo and because of the identity of its leadership with the trade union bureaucracy. These elements are not ready to form a new revolutionary party at this stage, but the

League with its critical support to the CCF as a Canadian expression of independent political action by labor is much closer to their level of consciousness. Our task at the present time is to assemble the cadre of the revolutionary left wing within the existing mass movement and the unions in preparation for the struggle to build a new revolutionary party.

THE CHARACTER OF OUR TORONTO ELECTION CAMPAIGN

The SEL has gone through two municipal election campaigns in Toronto since its formation. In these campaigns were ran candidates for the highest office. With a federal election coming up, we must analyze the character of these campaigns to avoid a formalistic approach to the federal election. In neither of the two election campaigns did we run against candidates of the CCF or those endorsed by the labor movement. The running of candidates was not in conflict with the orientation for a number of reasons. 1) Toronto municipal elections are of an officially non-partisan character, although virtually all candidates are of course backed by one or another of the political machines. 2) The official labor movement failed to present a slate against the boss parties who control the municipal administration.

We were able to run candidates not against the official labor movement, but as the only alternative to the Liberal-Tory administration, due to the failure of the labor movement to challenge them. Far from being against our orientation, by running, we advanced it in the sense of being spokesmen of the elementary demand of the workers for a labor administration. We intervened in the face of the refusal of the CCF to play its role as the party of the working class on the municipal field. We were all agreed at the time that it would have been against our orientation to run had the official labor movement and the CCF nominated a full slate. The only consideration at all that we gave to running against an official candidate was in the event of Controller Brand running for mayor. There was some question as to whether Brand had with his arch-reactionary stands, compromised himself in the eyes of the advanced workers, the CCF voters mainly, and was no longer considered a labor representative. Our running in that eventuality would have been based on an assessment of whether this was the case with the advanced workers. To have run against spokesmen of the CCF or those regarded as labor candidates by the labor movement as a whole, would have given the campaign a qualitatively different character, the character of an opposition party to the CCF and splitters of the labor vote.

The municipal election campaigns gave us a valuable opportunity to interpret our socialist program on the municipal level, something completely lacking in the platforms of the official labor candidates. Our advanced ideas were spread very widely and undoubtedly fell into the hands of many leftward moving workers, and had considerable influence on a small number. All these positive gains were made without damage to the orientation. In spite of the smears of the right wing leadership that we were not genuine labor candidates, our role and policies spoke for themselves before the advanced workers.

With a federal election due in June, we must take advantage of the campaign in the most fruitful manner to spread our socialist ideas and make contact with leftward moving workers. The campaign gives us an opportunity to spell out before the advanced workers just what we are; a revolutionary socialist league giving unconditional support to the struggle of the working class for a workers and farmers government, concretely, a CCF government. This unconditional support to the CCF against all other parties will in no way temper our political criticisms of the CCF leadership. Side by side with, and an indispensible part of our support to the CCF in the election, must be a full presentation of our socialist program, the program so lacking in the official organs and campaign material of the CCF. While supporting the CCF in the Vanguard, we must present to the advanced workers our program as a weapon, and the most effective weapon, in fighting for a real workers and farmers government, one that can really answer the needs of the Canadian workers.

It is not part of our orientation to whitewash and cover-up the mistakes and crimes of the leadership. Our aim and our main task in this election and all campaigns of the league is to encourage leftward moving workers to participate in the mass movement armed with our revolutionary socialist criticism. Our paper is not addressed at this time to the mass of the working class, but to those workers who have already achieved a high degree of political consciousness. The most important gains we can make in this election are to reach with our views even a small number of these workers, and organize them into an effective fighting cadre, the SEL, thereby deepening our integration in the working class movement as it is.

CANDIDATE WOULD BE A BARRIER

Far from aiding in the accomplishment of our objectives in the election, the running of a candidate against the CCF, even in one seat where they have no chance, would raise a barrier between ourselves and the advanced workers, most of whom look upon the CCF, even though critical of it, as their class party. Such a move would be in flagrant contradiction with our whole course of integration into the working class movement over the last six or seven years. It would represent a decisive step in action if not in words along the road to a repudiation of our entry into the CCF and penetration of the mass movement as it exists, the course dictated by the realities of political life in Canada.

The presentation of a representative of our group in opposition to a candidate of the CCF would in fact be the act of a party in the eyes of the workers, or rather that of a small sect trying to act like a party. No matter what claims we made to supporting the CCF in all but this one riding, to those advanced workers who support the CCF, we would appear as a group, hostile to their class party, a sect having no roots in the experience of the Canadian workers. This barrier of an anti-CCF candidate would present itself particularly sharply in the very riding where we would be concentrating the bulk of our forces, where we would be doing our most extensive canvassing. The anti-Trotskyist campaign of the CCF leadership would find an even more fertile base, a base created by ourselves. It is true that socialist ideas, the program of the SEL, represents an unpopular minority within the working class movement. This is inevitable in a period of decline of the labor movement such as today. But are we to consciously adopt a policy which places even more barriers in our way?

If we are to take such a decisive step towards becoming an independent party as running against the CCF implies, we must first make certain that deep-going changes are taking place in working-class politics in Canada. We must ask ourselves the question....has the situation in the Canadian labor movement changed so qualitatively in the last two years, that the SEL can reasonably pose itself before the working class, not just with our program against that of the right wing of the CCF Party, but as organization to organization? .... The answer is demonstrably, NO!

The question has been raised in the first document of this discussion, the "Memorandum on the CCF", that it is possible that the Canadian workers as a whole will not go through a CCF experience. The document also states that "we are not captives of those formulas developed under different times and conditions". We can all agree with these statements in general. But what concrete "different times and conditions" are we working under now. The proposal to run in the federal election means that proponents of this course believe that a qualitative change in the situation is taking place. Otherwise, this proposal is politically irresponsible.

Let us examine more closely the probabilities of development of the CCF, and the course of labor political action in Canada. We have long been aware that the CCF has been declining as a movement for years. This was the case when we entered and it is the case today. Political life is stagnant with little discussion and virtually no socialist criticism in the clubs. The extreme rightward course of the

leadership has resulted in a decimation among the socialist elements and activists in the movement, and a lack of attractiveness for leftward-moving workers to join and participate in the activities of the party. These were all considerations in our decision to publish the Vanguard, considerations which make it even more necessary than before that we have a vehicle to reach these unattached workers with our socialist ideas.

We have speculated with some grounds that it is possible that the CCF will be replaced or incorporated in some new labor party formation. Such a new party would be organized by the bureaucrats of the CLC in the hope that it would have a wider attraction than the CCF which has been unable to gain the adherence like the British Labor Party, of the class as a whole. Such a possibility may well be posed if the CCF fails to make substantial gains in this election. In this sense we can say that it is possible the Canadian workers will not go through a CCF experience. But such a new labor party, organized through manipulation by the top brass of the CCF and the CLC, would be nothing more than a consolidation of the CCF as we see it (a party of independent labor political action) on a higher plane, and with a broader base. It would insure even more certainly that the Canadian workers as a whole would go through a labor party experience.

It has been stated by supporters of running in the election, that the decline of the CCF and the question mark around its future gives us an opportunity to move out independently, independently in the sense of running in the federal election under our own banner and taking on more of the attributes of a party. It has been claimed that working class politics is in a state of flux and that we can use the situation to intervene independently. Whatever "flux" there is around the labor party-CCF question is not a result of any radicalisation of the class, but marks a consolidation of reformism. The labor party is at any rate a question for the future. For this election, the CCF is the labor party. The endorsation of the CCF by the OFofL, the united labor movement in Ontario, has stamped the CCF more than ever as the political expression of the working class in Canada.

The only opposition to endorsation in the 700 delegate convention came from a handful of rightist anti-politicals. There was no left critical support, let alone left opposition to endorsation of the CCF. This situation is generally reflected in the ranks. Those workers who are politically conscious at all generally support the CCF. The scattering of left critics are generally on a low level. They dislike the middle class leadership of the CCF and believe it to be out of touch with the real life of the workers. Some militants are disinterested in the CCF because of the close identity between the leadership and the trade union brass. But there is no viable left-wing tendency within the PACs, let alone one looking for a revolutionary socialist party. The best militants and socialists are in a small number developing criticisms of the CCF. These are the ones we can hope to influence. But they are not by any means looking at this stage for a revolutionary party. In fact, a new labor party, which will not at this time be built in left conflict with the CCF, but will encompass and supplant it, would meet the needs and demands of most of the politically advanced workers at this time. Further experience and struggle on a much higher plane will be necessary in a labor party or revitalised CCF before even the most advanced workers will even consider the necessity for a revolutionary socialist alternative to a reformist labor party formation.

Running ourselves as an independent CCF candidate could only be justified in two possible situations. One would be that there should be a revolutionary socialist left wing in the CCF or PACs moving in the direction of a new revolutionary party. This is obviously not the case. The other possibility would be of an entirely different character. We could intervene in line with our orientation in the event of the failure of the CCF to nominate, much like our municipal campaigns. This is an unlikely possibility to take place in an area (close to Toronto or Vancouver) where we could feasibly run. But in the event of the CCF failing to run due to a deal with a bourgeois party or other considerations, such a move would be worthy of consideration.

To run against the CCF in the present situation would be to represent only ourselves. It would have the negative aspect of confronting those advanced workers (the vast majority) who still have CCF illusions with the barrier of an independent anti-CCF formation. On the other hand it would not have the positive character of providing a rallying point for other advanced workers who are looking for new party, for few if any exist. To run a candidate of our own without any base, to act as a party without any roots in the real processes of the class struggle in Canada, would stamp us in the eyes of the advanced workers as a little sect, divorced from reality. Such a course would be politically irresponsible, and would represent an adventuristic approach to political struggle.

WHAT WE CAN GAIN IN THIS ELECTION

This federal election gives us a great opportunity to advance the cause of socialism in Canada. We can spread our socialist program with door-to-door work with the Vanguard, and build our sub base. The Vanguard should give our socialist presentation and interpretation of the issues facing the Canadian people in the election, and point out the inadequacies of the program of the leadership. We must completely disassociate ourselves from the reactionary positions of the CCF brass and give our own principled position. We must spell out before the advanced workers in our press, the precise meaning of our orientation; our support for a workers' and farmers' government, combined with our revolutionary socialist criticism of the course and policies of the leadership of the party. The course of development of the class struggle in Canada is going to be in its next stages through and around the CCF or a labor party (the CCF on a broader base). We must arm those advanced workers both inside and outside the CCF with our Marxist arsenal of weapons to carry the struggle forward.

The election gives us the opportunity to meet with advanced workers. Wherever possible we should work in the CCF election campaigns and search out the better elements among the campaign workers, work with them, and talk to them about our ideas. The League should launch an independent campaign of its own, supporting the CCF, and at the same time presenting our criticisms of the leadership and talking about our socialist program. We can expect to gain many contacts and subscribers to the Vanguard in the process of the campaign. An anti-CCF candidate would hamper all this work and gain us nothing. It would not open doors to us; it would close them.

Our task today is to build the League, to begin the assembling of the cadre of the mass revolutionary party of the future, and to integrate our forces in the working class movement as it is, to extend and deepen our influence. This does not mean political adaptation to reformism, to burying ourselves in a fruitless arena of work. Our program must be publicized to the advanced workers, and we must search out and recruit leftward-moving workers to our League. This can only be done within the framework of the working class movement as it is. The mass revolutionary party cannot be built from an ivory tower. Let us not embark on a course which may confine us to one.

E4 1955-57 RD Tor. Minutes

June 21. 1957

To the Toronto SEL

Dear Comrades;

With the resignation of comrade Mitchell from the National Committee-Political Committee and the extension of Comrade Olson's leave of absence, the Political Committee has been understaffed. The PC has been discussing the matter of overcoming this situation. Some months ago it recommended to the National Committee that one person be elected to the N.C.-PC from the Toronto Branch.

To our knowledge there is no precedent for such an action traditionally in a Bolshevik party persons are elected to the highest body between convention by the highest body itself--the national convention. However we have been unable to hold a formally constituted national convention for several years now and we are not projecting one until next year. Therefore the political committee has devised this method to meet this problem. While to-date we have not received formal agreement from the West Coast NC members we are interpreting their [redacted] silence as agreement.

We therefore propose that the Toronto branch proceed to elect one of its ranks to the Political Committee-National Committee. In view of the importance of this action, to assure that the branch can give full consideration to this matter and will elect in its opinion the most suitable candidate, notice of motion should be given, nominations made and the actual election be held at different consecutive meetings. The election should be by closed ballot.

fraternally

Ross Dowson

Ross Dowson
for the P.C.

July 18, 1957

Charlie Roos
New Brunswick

Dear Charlie;

Glad to get your note. I mailed off the UAW leaflets, some Vanguards and Militants right away. I hope you got them alright. This morning I shipped off some material that may be of use to farmers. Harry went over to the CCF office and the UAW and picked it up. If you need more we can probably pick up more. I have also just wrapped up the last two Militants so you will be able to keep up with what is going on and enclosed along with them a few items that should be useful to you in whatever contact work you manage to carry on. If you can use any more literature drop us a line and we will send it on. I hope that the material is addressed satisfactorily

It would be an excellent idea for one of us to appear down there and move out with you to Glace Bay ,Sidney and other proletarian concentrations. However I do not think that it is possible this year. I would be the only one who could possibly take the necessary time off and then there is the paper and the pressure of other work. Your proposal comes on us sudden We had more or less made plans to use what spare time we had this summer to do the same kind of work--but here in Ontario. As a matter of fact I am slated to go out with Alan for a week into Kitchener, Guelph, Galt and other industrial towns which are within about a 200 mile radius of Toronto. We feel that actually this is more important than the Maritimes as we can reasonably hope to follow up anything fruitful that comes out of it. We can even expect that a person we might turn up in London for instance could manage to come into Toronto for important forums. The Maritimes are an awful long way away. If we even had something in Montreal it would be different. I am afraid that we are going to be stuck with only one agent in that area at this time...namely you. I am hoping that you can manage to take a sort of side trip to Sidney and Glace Bay. They would be well worth seeing. You know the Mineworkers in Glace Bay were the first union in America that affiliated to the Red International of Trade Unions. McLachlan was a big man in the Mineworkers in the 20's and he played an important role in the founding of the Canadian Communist Party. Our comrade Jack MacDonald must have done quite a bit of political work in that area at one time for a I recall that he was arrested down there in a free speech struggle in the early 20's My impression is that the LPP has very little down there although up until recently they used to include these towns in their national tours. Anything we can do to help you do whatever you can we would very much like to do. In my opinion the best thing would be to sell some subscriptions to WORKERS VANGUARD. Then these people would be getting 12 different issues containing our interpretation of what is going on in Canada and the world. It is the next best contact to actual personal contact that we could have. If you can use any more papers just give us a call we always run plenty off the presses and we will send them off immediately.

Gald you liked our branch. Yes, we have a good group, quite young and enthusiastic. We certainly get a lot done for our limited forces. As I see it we will very shorily be taking a qualitative leap in membership. I know everyone would be more than pleased to have you stay here and work with us---more than pleased to have the benefit of your experience. No doubt you noticed that our group is quite young and quite inexperienced taken as a whole--and your experiences would be of inestimable value. Now I dont want to flatter you---I dont want this to go to your head Charlie but much as we would like you here I feel that you are even more important to the proper functioning of the Vancouver branch.

You know I was very much impressed by the little work that I was able to do with you while I was in Vancouver last year. It seems to me that you have a very valuable gift of being able to move quite freely in and around workers--particularly workers who under normal circumstances have a certain suspicion of us, a certain distrust--workers who have been to some extent influenced by Stalinists or by red baiters. My impression is that you must weight very important in the Vancouver scheme of things--particularly their plans hopes and aspirations of doing work in the Stalinist circles. I would take it that you have a leave of abscance from your union. I do not know whether your health is such that you will be able to work the old jobs--probably you could manage to get lighter work and still stay in the union and maintain and develop your contacts. But I think that it would be bad if you lost your membership in your union.

Here is what I propose; When you are well rested up and at least a month or so before your leave of absence from the union would expire why dont you hop it up to Toronto here. We would like very much to have you . We will give you lots to keep you busy. Then just prior to the expiration of your leave, return to Vancouver. While there, take the whole matter of your work up with the branch there. Might I dare to suggest that certain unfortun personal experiences that you have had may be coloring your present attitude about returning to Vancouver.....feelings that after a short while may well dissappear and the old longing fo for the smell of the salt air from the Vandouver docks, the mist and the rains and the moderate winters will be calling you back . Do you not think this would be the best way to handle this matter. Of course a revolutionary should be where he can contribute most to the movement---and a revolutionists own opinion on this matter is very important. That is why I tend to think that we should not make any hasty move...that you should come here with us for a while, then return to Vancouver, talk things over there and then make your decision. I am sure that the Vancouver comrades would decided this matter both in your and the party's best interests.

Hope you are enjoying your vacation. Drop us another line next opportunity you have. We dont know anything about the Maritime union and political scene up here. It is like another world.

fraternally

Ross
569 Yonge Street
Toronto, Ont.

August 9, 1957

Dear Percy;

Of course I knew that you were tied up. I justhappened to be passing through and thought I would drop in on you. Yes, I will phone next time. That was the first day of a little tour that I and a comrade made of lower Ontario--a five day tour.

It was quite an interesting experiment. Through some contact that we have made with an ex-Stalinist -ex-activist we manged to obtain about 30 names and addresses of Stalinists in the London, Kitchener, St Catherines area. And we dropped in on them. If this list is typical the Salsberg element have very little influence in the actual pre-convention LPP rank and file. That is not to say of course that they have no influence in peripheral elements but we did not meet one Salsberg sympathizer. And if this list was typical Buck too is in a very very bad way. The bulk of the persons turned out to be in their fifties and sixties--and some older. Not at all unfriendly--only one showed me the door after I introduced myself.

We were fortunate in that we made the tour just as the purge in the USSR had taken place---and all the promies about "rule by law" and"collective leadership " were exposed. IN A great many of these xxxxx Stalinists are just worn out---when we raised various aspects of developments in the USSR and this latest some of them quite frankly expressed their complete disillusionment, unwillingness, or inability to come to grips with the new political problems and to carry on as political persons. They are old, tired and confused ---and no doubt many of them answered the machines call, came out behind Buck for the last time. Of course we did meet a couple who may have some possibilities. We had a very interesting and intelligent discussion with one chap in Thorold. We had great difficulty in selling subs--they are afraid it would appear of establishing any kind of regular connection with us--but we did manage to sell some pamphlets.

We also contacted some CCFers. Met a very promising young Steelworker in Port Colborne, made some good contact with a couple of fellows who used to be around the Krehm group, the old League for a Revolutionary Workers Party, in Niagara Falls. And perhaps the most interesting was our contacting a Dr MacLean in St Catherines. Some while back a right wing CCFer who happened to drop in on the store in the process of my attempting to acquaint him with our paper mentions that of course he had seen it--a Dr MacLean in St Kitts had shown it to him around the time of the Winnipeg convention and had told him that if you do not agree with a papragrpah in it on the question of nationalisations why you were not a socialist. Unfortunately this docitr was not in town when we called but his wife was--it turned out that he had not seen the Vanguard but had come into contact with the De Leonist Weekly People. He had been a CCF provincial or federal candidate several times and xxxxxxx is now on the city council. It appears that he told his wife that he had not left the CCF but the CCF had left him with the Winnipeg Declaration. I have just sent him a lengthy letter--I am sure that such a sectarian paper ofs the Weekly People will have little impact involved as he is in day to day problems of a class character.

One of the most xxxxxxxxx notable observations that we made was the complete in activity of both the LPP and the CCF in these various important industrial communities. We met the leading Stalinist in London and also a very discerning leftist whose information would almot certainly be correct---neither the LPP or the CCF have any effective forces in this town of about 100,000 with another 50,000 on the outskirts. Just as soon as we have xxxxxxx a few forces to spare we will be sending some in to these area.

--nto Kitchener where neither are doing anything--into Stratford where neither have anything much--and of course into Hamilton.

According to reports from the US--several of us attended their last convention and we have had some visitors this summer--things are not moving there yet--the branches appear to have stopped declining and are holding their own--perhpas making a few gains. Here you will be pleased to know we are, definitely are--making gains. We are not picking uppoliticals but young working class types--several of them recent immigrants from England, Ireland. As you will note from the column in the paper we have managed to sustain a very high level of activity in the last few summer months. Of course it would be nice to bring into our ranks some workers who have had some experience in the labor movement but niethere the CCF nor the LPP appear to have been an attractive force to anyone for at least the last decade. We are picking up young people who have to be educated from scratho---of course this has its advantages too as there is not the big job of uneducation.

You know you readh a certain stage in the building business after plodding along on a modest scale where you feel you are on the verge of moving out--taking a qualitiative leap. I feel that this Fall will see us move into this situation--that we may well be in a position to set up another branch. We have some contacts--we recruit a couple of them--then we dont have any for a while then shortly we have some more---so that the gap in between is getting shorter and shorter--and we seem to always have some new potential material moving around us. One thing that seems fairly certain at anyrate is that this Fall we will be able to start up a youth group

But I see that it is a little after five and the comrade who was looking after the store when you drppped in has to leave and I have to take over until 7. This is a new development for us--this comrade in the store. We are getting a littde more maneuverability. He is working part time in industry and with his wife's aid they are able to maintain their one child family and leave him time to handle the store. Stop and talk to him next time you are in if you have the time---I think that he has considerable promise.

And thanks very much for the pictures you left.

Looking forward to seeing you on your next trip into the big city

warmest regards

Ross

The big developments are in England.

One of our visitors just returned from a short stay there and he tells me that we have made great gains amongst the Stalinist intellecutuals. Did I send you the Labor Review with the yellow cover, He tells me that this magazine is put almost entirely by new comrades of ours from out of the Stalinist intellecutal circles that are in a terrific ferment.

August 18, 1957

E.G. Larrabee Jr
215 West 23rd St
New York 11, N.Y.
U.S.A.

Dear Comrade Larrabee;

I must thank you for your very interesting letter and the enclosed poems. I would have replied to you long ago however your note arrived just as I was shoving off for a short tour of the southern Ontario area. Then as soon as I returned I found that I was compelled to take my holidays or get none until well into the Fall or Winter.

Thank you for your fine words on the Vanguard. However I must say you cause me a little uneasiness with your contrasting it to the Militant--and unfavorable to the Militant too. In many ways I look upon the Militant as a model of revolutionary socialist journalism

I see that you consider the Militant to be sectarian and you consider that the Trotskyists suffer from an ingrown sectarianism. This interests me very much not that I can lay any claim to being a specialist on the problems of the American labor movement but from the point of view of building the Marxist-Leninist party in this country. I am quite well acquainted with the various struggles that have taken place in the SWP primarily because all the splits, the struggles that you mention have been well documented and in their own way found their reflection in the revolutionary socialist movement in this country. You mention the Shachtmanite split --a struggle which led to a split--"instead of temporary tendencies that appear and fade within the party" which to you is an "example of the old isolated and ossified state of the SWP." I wonder if you have had the opportunity to read tow books on this split--James P Cannon's THE STRUGGLE FOR A PROLETARIAN PARTY and Leon Trotsky's IN DEFENCE OF MARXISM. It seem to me that these two documents which,written in the heat of the struggle would tend to reveal all the heat, the exaggeration, whatever sectarian tnedancies there were, reveal the dispute to have involved some very basic differences. If one considers that the defence of the Soviet Union as a workers state is of no great importance, a difference of concern only to sectarians why then the SWP which fought Shachtman on this question surely suffers congential sectarianism. If one considers that the struggle to build a Bolshevik party, one governed by the principles of democratic centralism to be one that would only excite a sectarian whyn then on this count too the SWP can be said to suffer from congential sectarianism. The correctness of this struggle carried on by the SWP in 1940 should now be clear to anyone it would seem to me. For I see by your letter that you are acquainted with the truly dogmatic line of shachmanism today--their mad hurry to dissolve their forces in the ossified melieu of those Wall Street socialists in the SP-SDF.

Of course any small movement, a movemt with an advanced program, isolated, develo sectarian tendencies. I am sure that members of the SWP would be the last to deny this. In fact from my vantage point up here it seem to me that they have done a most admirable job in fighting tendencies that must inevitably develop in their ranks from time to time--so admirable that I am unfamiliar with any successes such tendencies have had in shaping the SWP and the Militant policy and line in any notable way.

I am suprised also that you refer to the struggle with the Cochranites. I gather th they have now dissolved what organized form they have had in the past few years--and have

almost raised to a principle the idea of no organization. Lenin of course commenced the struggle to build the Bolshevik wing of the Russian Social-Democratic party with what forces were to hand, under the circumstances that prevailed. I am sorry that I cannot really satisfactorily deal with the AMERICAN SOCIALIST of the past year or so as I have given up reading it----the last issues I read had nothing much to say that the New Republic, The Nation and Time did not say. But we had our own experiences with the Cochranites--you see proving that SWP "sectarianism" had nothing to do with it--this struggle took place in Canada and elsewhere. It may seem strage today after the crushing of the Hungarian revolution but four years ago a current developed in the revolutionary socialist movement that gave up the struggle against Stalinism, characterizing it as the wave of the future---predicting its self reform. This tendency here in Canada suddenly saw all kinds of merit in the right wing reformists that head up the CCF and in the trade union bureaucracy. To wind up this short report our Cochranites have just walked out of the picture--they are not participating in the efforts to acquaint the working class of Canada with socialist ideas at all not to speak of participating in the struggle to build a revolutionary socialist party here in Canada. ... either through the regroupment of those socialist forces that now exist or through polarizing all the forces around one of the exisitng organizations.

No I am afraid on the basis of my own familiarity with these two cases that you argument on the sectarian character of the SWP does not hold water. I think that if you investigate these matters further you will gain a better appreciation of the yoeman work that the comrades in the SWP have done over the past years to provide an effective lever for the regroupment of revolutionary socialist forces in the United States. As I say I have always looked to the SWP as a model ---not pergect of course for as Marxists we do not know perfection

I found the short biographical sketch extremely interesting. Surpised and pleased to see that Dubinsky hasn't got your number and that you are able to maintain valuable connections in the trade union movement. We have been reading of the splendid forums that the Young Socialist Forum has been holding in New York. This is probably the most favorable development that has yet come out of the regroupment process don't you think. It looks from here that you comrades are laying the foundations, solid foundations, for a national socialist youth movement. I have heard that you will be publishing a paper shortly---we are certainly looking forward to it. We have several good youth types around us. The CCF youth group is defunct here in Toronto but there is a Stalinist youth group and it may be possible this fall for us to give a hand to any youth that may feel interested in building something. I am sure that your paper would be a big help.

But to get to your poems--the ones that you so laboriously copied out and so graciously submitted for publication. I have taken them up with our editorial committee and we do not think that we are able to use them. Not that they are in our opinion bad poetry at all. We just dont think that they are suitable for publication in such a paper as ours. Thought and Sleep either do not have enough to say or do not say enough clearly. None of them in my own opinion are of such a style as to be attractive to working class types Not that I think poetry does not appeal to workers--Joe Hill and Ralph Chaplin gave the lie to that and so did Robert Service. From the success of these three amongst the workers I gather however that workers want a simple obvious theme, a simple rhyme and rythme, and we of course want to publish something which has a message. The theme of Sleep seems to be quite contrary to the task that we have set ourself--AWAKE--for you have felt the desire to speel, the wish to be let dream too long. With regards to the Spanish poem...have you had occasion to study the Spanish question---have you read two pamphlets by Felix Morrow---~~Spain~~ Revolution and Counter-revolution in Spain---and I forget the other one---have you read Trotsky's SPAIN THE LAST WARNING? I am afraid that the Spanish struggle did not fail because "humanities patriot's " were "too few". Nor is it so that tere was "No voice of protest, no hot debate" here in Canada and the US on the question of Spain.

It is sad to have to say it but the idealistic youth who went from America and elsewhere to jioin the International Brgade did not play a revolutionary role. I heard a one time prominent Stalinist who returned from Spain boast on the street corner here in Toronto how he had murdered POUM ists and Anarchists with his own hands---- The Interentional Brigade was used to prop up the Popular Front government and sections of it were used by the Stalinists and the Popular Front government to crush the forces for porletarian revolution that ~~xxxxxxxxx~~ first stopped Franco in his tracks and tried in a fumbling way it is true to carry the fight to a successful conclusion by mobilizing the revolutionary forces of the Spanish and Morrocan masses in the fight for socialism against Franco. Read George Orwell's book HOMAGE TO CATALONIA. The Popular Front government was Spain's Kerenskyad. And the International Brigade was its tool against the developing forces of Bolshevism. As for the dispute, the protest and hot debates in the US Murry Weiss I am sure would be pleased to give you documentation on its reflection in the Socialist Party of the US of those days.

All of which shows to go you comrade Larrabee that a poet should write of somethi thing within his own experience or at least something which he is well boned up on, particularly when it comes to poems with great political themes.

Of course I write this not in anyway to deter you from writing more poetry and sending it into us--one the contrary as I am sure you will understand it is not only in expanation of our handling of these poems but I hope with a view to helping you write poetry that will be more suitable in our opinion for publication in our paper. How about something on Hungary which it is obvious from your biographical sketch had great impact on your political thinking.

Are you acquainted with Ralph Chaplin's poetry..and have you read Service--some of his Ballads of a Red Cross Man. A few of Kenneth Fearing's poems I thought good--and the same with Patchen--allthough many of his are rather arty. Do you know John Wheelright's poetry. I have never come across any of his but I have heard that he was a genuine revolutionary poet. I am sure he must be in the New York library. And of course there is the great Shelley. We have a poetic friend up here by name Irving Layton--his Improved Binocular are won high tribute from William Carlos Williams. Rather sophisticated but I am sure that he must have the odd thing tucked away that might be of interest to us.

But I must close. Thanks for your contributions. Will you try again? And again thanks for your kinds words about our paper We certainly do intend to continue to develop along solid lines and grwo in the coming struggles.

With socialist greetings

Ross Dowson

I suppose you know Russian poerty of its revolutionary days---Bebel--Mayakovsky

August 18, 1957

(Nasir)

Dear George;

Well, I have finally decifered who George is. I never thought that it was George Nasir--for what would he be doing in Vancouver--and obviously it is someone I know well from the most casual character of the postcard--someone who more or less assumes that I know or would perhpas expect him to be in Vancouver. That is why the letter was addressed to George Messenger but I see you got it alright. Messenger is a Toronto fellow that I know well who has been talking about going west. I phoned his place three times and got no answer and guessed it might be him.

Are you escaping from the bitter Winnipeg winters to the balmy breezes of BC or are you out for a short change of scenery. At anyrate it cannot help but be a good experience. Glad to managed to get into contact with Bill and Lillian so quickly. We have some very good people there, well integrated in the labor movement- both the CCF and the trade unions and with wide political experience. I am sure that your stay there will be very profitable. Hope you do not have difficulty in getting a job. ~~xxxxxxx~~ Or are you staying for any length of time? I would t ink that the job situation there would be difficult.

Thanks for the subscription. But I am tearing out of your letter the fellows name. I am not at all sure what it is--would you print it out. My guess is Diamond.

Suprised to see you had never come across Fryer's book before. As you have probably guessed from his writings now appearing in the Militant he is now one of us. Yes, the book is excellent, although I am sure that he could write a much better one now that he has gained some real insight on Stalinism. You can see the great scope of his development from his letter to Apthecker on the latters book on Hungary. We are going to re-publish this from the Militant in our next issue in all probability. Are you aware that Fryer is now publishing a weekly newsletter? It sells for $5.00 for six months. Full of interesting bits of information that doesn't appear anywheres else.

I am sure that you will find the labor movement on the West Coast very stimulating. While it is becoming more like the Eastern labor movement it is not yet quite like it. It still has some of the primitive rebelliousness of the frontier. They must be getting fewer and fewer in number but there are still the remnants around of the old Socialist Party of Canada. For years it was they who gave the BC CCF its leftist coloration. Hope you manage to meet Malcolm Bruce one of the real old timers and a real pioneer of communism on this continent. However there is hardly any prupose in my telling you about the BC labor movement when you are in touch with our comrades there who know it so well--- in a short while you should know all I know about it.

Are you there on a visit--long or short--or are you going to seek work and stay a while. Do you want the bundle to continue to go to Winnipeg? Let us know when you are able.

warmest regards

Ross Dowson

August 18, 1957

Dear Percy;

I have just returned from a 5 day vacation to find a note from Jerry; who has now gone on his vacation.

Yes, you will find Buffalo very interesting. We have a fiarly large branch there. We are the only functioning radical group on the Niagara frontier as they put it. Some of our leading people reside there—one chap who writes in the Militant under the name Black and another who writes as Theodore Kovalesky. You will recall them no doubt.

They have a headquarters on Main Street but most often no one is there—it is doubtful if you would find anyone in the daytime. But they meet there on Friday nights and I am sure you would be very welcome. At anyrate I will give you the address of a couple of the leading comrades and you could call there anytime.

Sam Ballan

Rosemary and

You will find Buffalo stimulating to say the least. They have long held to concepts at great variance with the entire rest of the party. They hold to the position that the Hungarian struggle was developing into a capitalist restorationist——a counter-revolutionary struggle. They have many other indepedent positions. We do not have as close relationship to Buffalo as we would like. Unfortunately we have practically no cars here in Toronto. However the odd time one of us goes over for a visit. This last Spring we invited about 10 of them to come over for a disussion on Hungary—the discussion was most stimulatingbut the sides remained unmoved.

warmest regards

Ross

569 Yonge Street
Toronto 5, Ont.
August 28,1957

Tim Wohlforth
305 East 21st Street
New York 10, N.Y.

Dear Comrade Tim;

Thanks for the copies of WHAT MAKES SHACHTMAN RUN. I am enclosing $1.10 in payment. I seized the opportunity a few nights ago to read it and in my opinion you have made an original and important contribution with this bulletin. Shachtmanism as a political phenomenum has not held our attention up here in Canada since the 1940 split or certainly not since the unity maneuvers that were thrust upon him some years later. Our labor party formation called the CCF is a much bigger and wealthier home than the SDF-SP could ever be and is a much greater pressure on centrists. It sucked them into its ranks and in recent years what with its rightward course has destroyed them. That does not mean of coursethat the experience you have just gone through and are still going through will not be met by us in some new form in the future.

Thanks also for all the material on your struggle to build a militant socialist youth movement that you have been sending our way. No doubt through this experience all the comrades involved have grown heads taller and a real cadre capable of sustaining a movement has been developed. Several of our youth comrades have been learning by your experiences by reading about them--much less valuable but valuable nonetheless.

We are certainly looking forward to receiving the YOUNG SOCIALIST. A couple of comrades have turned $10 over to me to forward onto you. They would like you to send them a subscription and to apply what is left over to your fighting fund. Would you enter subscriptions for;

Alan Harris, Apt 2
866 Danforth Ave
Toronto 6, Ont.
Canada

Joe Rosenblatt
63 Atlas Ave
Toronto 10, Ont.
Canada.

You can be sure that we will aid you in the circulation of the Young Socialist. You can start right off by sending a bundle of 35 copies of each issue to

The Toronto Labor Bookstore
569 Yonge Street
Toronto 5, Ont.
Canada. With this bundle at hand we willbe able to pick up subscriptions.

At present there is no effective youth movement in this country. The CCF has a youth group but the only place that it appears to have any strength is in Saskatchewan. It appears to be on the upgrade there thanks primarily to the resources that the adult movement has thrown into it. The CC is in office in that province.It would appear to be pretty much of a social group. Here in Ontario there is nothing of any importance. The right wing with the aid of the adult movement has decapitated it several times....by

diciplinary actions---and of course programmatically it has long been inhospitable to militant youth. The Stalinists have a youth movement---and I express it that way consciously for ~~xxxxxxxxx~~ there is a long history of both the reformists of the CCF type and the Stalinists really dominating the youth movements associated with them. This movement did and no doubt still does contain some good elements. When I was in Montreal last Spring I had the priviledge of addressing a group of young people who at that time considered themselves to be dissident members of the National Federation of Labor Youth. They have been hard hit but at their national convention here early this summer they appear to have been able to hold together but on a much reduced basis. They have given up their paper, an elaborate fortnightly tabloid, they have changed their name, and have no doubt continued to decline. We will have a more accurate picture when they open their Fall activity.

While I do not like to anticipate the wishes of the members of the SOCIALIST EDUCATIONAL LEAGUE it is possible that we will be able this fall to give substantial aid to the organization of a revolutionary socialist youth group here in Toronto. We have some excellent young socialists in the League who with the aid of your paper could I feel build a fairly effective group. The absence of a CCF youth group and the crisis in the Stalinist youth movement would lead one to think that there are favorable opportunities to re-group the best elements amongst the youth. Should we decide to make an effort in this direction we would probably encourage such a group to constitute itself a section of the youth movement that you comrades are in the process of building. However all this is in the future.

Right now we intend to send you several more $5 subscriptions to help you launch the paper without too much financial worry. Within a week or so I hope to be able to send you a fairly extensive list of names and addresses of CCF and Stalinist youth to whom you could send sample copies in expectation that some of them will result in subscriptions, and in the hope that one or two may even be sparked into active workers for the paper and for a militant socialist youth movement in Canada.

Would you like a Canadian correspondent for your paper once you get underway?

I know that I express the feelings of all the conscious revolutionary socialists in Canada when I congratulate you and your associates for your excellent work so far and for the plans that you have projected. There are many difficulties in the way but we are confident that you are well on that way to laying form foundations for the nation-wide socialist youth movement that is destined to play such an important role in the coming American Revolution.

with socialist greetings

Ross Dowson
secretary of the
Socialist Educational League.

September 1, 1957

Paul - Gerry Hoole
George - R.H.

Dear Reg, Bill, and Ellaline;

I should be working on the paper however there is an important matter that I wish to write you about and I will be tied up in the ensuing week puting the paper to press. I am refering to the matter of ~~xxxxxx~~ our sending someone out to give you a hand in your work. Comrade Paul dropped in today to tell me that comrade George is quite willing to pull up their family(one small child) and to head for Vancouver.

Since none of you know comrade Paul I will give you some information on him. He is a young comrade of about 28. He has been with us about four years now. He comes to us from the CCF and was expelled along with the fifteen. Both he and his wife--George-had been in the CCF for sometime before coming into contact with us. He is a very agressive comrade, lots of drive. He has functioned for the past year as branch organizer here which entails looking after the store from 12 noon to 5. He is a very serious comrade who over the past year or so has done a great deal of studying. He has been writing in the paper under the name Macpherson--you might look these items up. He is not a very good speaker but he can certainly develop along this line. He has a very good basic understanding of our views. He has a real ability to move amongst workers. When he came to us he was going to university. However he quit, ~~xxxxxxxxxxx~~ went into the rubber industry where he turned up some good contacts for us, sold many subs amongst the fellows, quickly got onto the PAC where he won the respect of his fellow workers. He decided to quit there however in order to pick up a trade and took up a welding course. He had difficulty ~~xxxxx~~ getting employment in the trade after the course and went back into rubber . He was working in this industry when we decided to take him in to work in the store. While in the store he impressed me with his ability to ~~xxxx~~ establish a good relationship with workers --with his ability to move into a situation, with his ability to ~~xxxxxxxxx~~ explain our ideas in a simple fashion.

My impression is that Comrade George is the kind of revolutionary who once convinced of the necessity of a thing knows no obstacles. To some degree this was the basis of some doubts as to her ability to go to Vancouver. When I suggested the proposition to him-his reply was that it was obviously necessary and he was immediately available. He has moved forward with the demands of the movemnt to some degree without consultation with comrade George who does not have the understanding of the movement that he has. We had more difficulty winning her to our movement than we did him. She too has been very active--she is a very able person but her activity and her development has been curtailed to a considerable degree by her shouldering most of the family responsibilities. They have a baby boy of about 2 years. For the past year comrade George has been working part time to sustain the household and at the same has taken most of the household responsibilities to give comrade Paul time to do party work. Comrade George is as I say quite able--she has written under the name Mary Hughes--she handles the filing for the paper, has given educationals etc. ~~xxxxxxx~~ I am sure that she too will develop rapidly under the Vancouver sun.

It seems to me that we have a good team here. And I am convinced that they are the best that we could give you. This is the opinion of all the PC including comrade Langely who you will note from the minutes also threw his and Virginian Wilson's hat into the ring, in case comrades Paul and George proved unable to go. Comrade Langley agrees that Paul is more roundedly suitable for the job out there as we see it. In my own opinion Langley needs more experience with workers in the shop, needs to learn how to move around more, and to develop a more aggressive spirit. No doubt he will develop these--- he is now in a good union situation --we have four of our people in the the one shop where he works. Comrade Wilson in many ways supplements Langley however within the next period we have to send someone into Hamilton, Oshawa winnipeg and the next period will see further development.

In comrade Paul you have our best or certainly one of our best subgetters. He would have had many more in the drive but he had to baby-sit many evenings. You have a comrade who has some writing ability. He has handled the store pretty well on his own and is familiar with the problems of running a store when we are able to set one up there. You have a comrade with lots of initiative, who can work on his own if necessary, who is agressive about moving in and among Stalinists, CCFers trade unionists,etc. You again will be a serious loss for us here in Toronto. And of course you will be getting two. George will be a real addition to the branch.

As you have noted they have a small child. Comrade George is prepared to immediately go out and get a job. This means that they would like to be able to make baby sitting arrangments. I doubt that there are creches for babies of two in Vancouver. Since Lillian has two young children is it possible to make some satisfactory arrangment here? As it is they have had their relatives relieve them of much of this. They would like to have an idea of what can be done along this line. Comrade George is a qualified public school teacher but she says she does not wish to work at this---she types and has other office experience. How is the job situation for females with her qualifications out there? Comrade Paul would I think have to get a part time job-preferably a morning job. He managed to get a very good one here which paid thrity dollars for 15 hours a week administering a small office and supply house from 9 to 12. The branch gave him $5 a week.

My understanding of the situation is this. As soon as comrade Paul arrives we would get a place which was suitable to set up as a Vanguard Vancouver office--a place where we could make a limited book display and start operating a book service on a modest basis, moving in the direction of shortly setting up a bookstore such as we have here. Comrade Paul would administer this office which would also serve us as a meeting place--a place for our own weekly meetings. Comrade Paul would act, with the agreement of the branch of course, as the branch organizer. He would be expected to move about freely with the paper, doing extensive contact work, subscription work,etc. He and George would expect to get modest financial aid from the branch. Am I correct?

Off hand I would say that they would be able to arrive in Vancouver in October sometime, certainly not later than November. I would imagine that some one of us there would be able to put them up until they managed to look around a bit.

Would you let me know what you think of this proposition as soon as possible. I would prefer that this letter go no further than you and the some one report to the branch using some of the information. One of yo

your recent visitors to our city met and must have had several talks with both George and Paul and could give his impressions.

I must tell you that i have no doubts at all about the suituability of these two comrades--they are at this time without any doubt in my mind the best that we could offer you

fraternally

Ross

Ross Dowson

September 23, 1957

Dear Reg;

Received Ship and Shop the other day. The Murdochville item is good although I wonder how the boys on the job go for the flippant terms, "union boy" etc that are used through it. Despite the writers protests with her pictures of workers in casts etc she exaggerates the rough and tumble character of the struggle. But I suppose the boys will discount some of it as the writing of a student and get a bang out of it as a whole.

Are you on the exchange list of the CUAGE and Angus' paper, also the Sask Commonwealth? Did you ever consider lifting material from the Vanguard. The Western Pulp and Paper Maker took three of our articles from the June issue and reproduced them in their August issue--with credit lines. The September Gauge published by the Operating Engineers published the column on Cancer and cigarettes. ..with credit line. I would imagine a considerable number of shop papers reproduce material from the Vanguard ....we happened to come across a copy of the mimeographed paper put out by the UMW Annaconda Brass local here in Toronto...they lifted one of our lead articles on labor struggles but gave no credit line. The Saskatcehwan Commonwealth has carried two articles on Murdochville written by Steel for the Gauge. Jim is helping to put the Gauge out

I am enclosing a copy of the amicus curiae brief that the Vancouver lawyer drew up. We have finally got the committee down here working...rather late in the day for support to the brief. This Thursday they have agreed to a meeting and we are being invited. We mimeod the brief and thus forced their hand ...certain motions are now being made to get the support of names. big names. Thursday will tell us the tale.

But my immediate purpose in dropping you this line is to ask if you will sit down to the typewriter and just write me all you know about what is going on in the LPP in the West. We have no idea whatsoever. Joe Hansen has written me to ask if I would prepare a 3,000 word article for the next ISR on the crisis in the Canadian Stalinist movement. Just facts will do. I do not need a rounded worked over article I would imagine you are best able to give me this information and easiest too. However if there is someone else who has been specialising on this field would you have him work on this and send it to me right away. Since it does not have to be worked over perhaps some one of the less experienced comrades who is not so busy could do this. At anyrate I would like to leave this matter in your hands. The sooner I get the material the better.

Read the item on Vancouver civic politics. Is the CCF now definitely out, are they running NO candidates at all? I notice the Labor Council is running three

fraternally

Ross

October 1,

Minutes of PC meeting [illegible], 1957

Present Kent, Timber, Langley.

Minutes of August 27 meeting read and adopted.

Financial Drive-- Toronto already has internal pledges of $750 and more to come. Vancouver has struck off a committee. Money is coming in from outside points. The drive appears to be well underway and to promise success.

Trotsky School - correspondence received to the effect that a session is scheduled to start December 1 and continue through to June 1--with a maximum of eight in the student body. Motion that the secretary immediately enquire as to whether the long standing offer to accept someone designated by us, but up until now not taken advantage of by us, remains open. Motion that in view of the fact that nominations have to be in by October 21 that we proceed on the basis that a student from here will be accepted in the coming school--both motions passed unan. Discussion of personell. Motion that a letter be sent to both Toronto and Vancouver inviting them to submit nominations--passed unanimously. Kent nominated Virginia Wilson.

Vancouver--- Kent reported receipt of a letter written on behalf of the NC members in Vancouver in reply to his letters to Thorne and to the branch via comrade Spencer. Letter read. It was noted that the PC proposition that we open a Vaguard office in Vancouver, heretofore thought agreed upon is opposed unanimously and on political grounds. ..that "it amounts to establishing the party openly, whether under the banner of the Fourth or not." In reply to some comments by Kent on the need to increase circulation of the Vanguard in the Vancouver area, which is less than fifty copies per issue, by opening up an office and having available a comrade or comrades who can do this work, a political disagreement on the nature of the paper is expressed....."The Vanguard has failed to do better here...because it does not reflect the orientation towards the mass movement(CCF) in a way that attracts attention." Discussion. It was pointed out that the Lewis letter expresses a fundamental disagreement with the orientation as outlined in the Memorandum submitted for discussion last January. There is basic agrement with the Memorandum in Toronto but a formal vote has been delayed in the expectation of receipt of contributions from Vancouver, Motion that the Vancouver NC members be urged or any other comrades willing and able be urged to contribute to the discussion on the Memorandum, that it be stressed that we immediately enter into a discussion so that any disagreement on the orientation can be resolved intelligently and not on individual aspects of our work--passed unanimously. It was suggested that should the comrades feel unable for any reason at this time to submit a written contribution that a discussion be taped that could be digested and transcribed by someone struck off here in the center.

Motion that we withdraw plans to arrange Comrade Paul and George going to Vancouver. It was noted that not only are the comrades opposed to the whole project as suggested in outline by the PC but that the other plans that they have, they say they can do their own staffing for. agreed.

It was noted that Vancouver plans to open a bookshop of somekind. Further correspondence which appears to be a record of a conversation that a Vancouver comrade had with a southern comrade now operating a bookstore. Suggestion that comrade Kent offer to provide Vancouver with information on the Toronto experience of operating a store for the past three years. The opinion was expressed that this would be a very risky venture since the Toronto store even after three years, as a broad store is not financially self sustaining and ties up a considerable amount of party funds

The justification for the store is that it has been an effective source of recruitment. It would seem that the Vancouver venture could not even have this justification as we do not have any open form of existence to which we could direct anyone who seemed promising--it would seem that all that would be gained would be the sale of a few peices of our literature.

Regroupment--Discussion on Socialist Forum that has been functioning sporadically under the auspices of the Cochranites--next speaker billed is Salsberg who attended last forum which was addressed by I.F. Stone. Agreed that we should pay more attention to this forum since it is possible that it may prove attractive to the Salsberg group because of its appearance of having CCF connections. The forum does not present itself as a regroupment body in fact its general direction in not towards Salsberg and ex-Stalinists but like the Shachtmanites in the US towards conciliation with the rightward moving CCF. However this also appears to be the direction of certain forces in the Salsberg group. While it is itself not a forum for regroupment it is highly possible that it will attract forces seeking regroupment. Report on Buck's charge of Trotskyism flung at latest defector Sims, discussion on interview with Penner who remains in but is in contact with Salsberg. Discussion on Toronto attempts to move in and around these circles and encourage an outward movement towards regroupment. Report on efforts to activiate the now apparently defunct Sobell Committee

World Congress--- correspondence received from the International Committee announcing the Fourth World Congress to be held in the month of June 1958. Motion that essential contents of the call be circulated -passed. Noted that Vancouver requested more information on the negotiations between the IC and the Pabloite IS. Motion that as soon as we receive the material requested from the IC--Pablo's Decline and Fall of Stalinism and Sinclair's reply that we forward this and other material to Vancouver NC comrades so that they can give a report to the branch -agreed-

October 13, 1957

Dear Comrades R & E & B

There is a by-election on November 4th in Hastings-Frontenac. The Conservative member elected to that seat a few months ago has stepped into the Senate in order to leave the seat open to the Honorable Sidney Smith secretary of State for external affairs. The nomination day is October 21. As things now stand it seems certain that Smith will take the seat by acclaimation.

The Liberals have already announced that they do not intend to contest it. There is no official word from the CCF but we would gather from the press' failure to mention them that it is known that they do not intend to contest the election. Yesterday I had an opportunity to raise the matter with a CCF activist who is close to the Ontario provincial office here in Toronto and informed me that they had no local organization there and that they were too badly off financially to contest the seat. Social Credit has not been mentioned but as you know they have no strength here and I think that it is almost excluded that they would harm their relationship with the Conservatives by running against Smith. So as things now stand it looks like there will be an acclaimation.

This riding is about 100 miles from Toronto. It is just north of Belleville and Kingston. It is a large riding but the most eastern and northern section of the riding is almost devoid of population. The most western portion, that closest to Toronto is a developing mining area--it included Marmora--an iron development and Bancroft a uranium development. There are several fair sized towns--numbering two and three thousand and I would imagine since Kingston is only five miles outside the border of the riding that many workers live along the highways. The Ottawa-Toronto highway goes through the riding.

We have been having some informal discussion since Saturday when it was apparent that there would be no contest along the line of our running a candidate.

From a political point of view everyone apparently, is agreed that it would be a marvellous opportunity for us. We could attempt to make the primary issue the Canadian governments foreign policy. This would be natural as in the public mind we would not be just contesting a seat but contesting for a seat against the government's minister of foreign affairs. This way as the circumstances could not be better...for after all this is the big issue in the public mind--particularly since the development by the USSR of the earth satellite and the inter continental ballistic missile. From an organizational point of view there are no doubt difficulties however it seems to me that they can be overcome without much difficulty. The campaign could be conducted on a budget of about 5 to 600 dollars. Two hundred of this would be an immediate loss--the deposit. We can get this money I feel certain. There are also personell difficulties since the riding is 100 miles away from Toronto. However we are in pretty good shape to handle this too---it is an ill wind that brings no good. We have four or five unemployed comrades. Comrade Mitchell is in a position to take over the store which I have been handling since the other comrade had to take a

full time job. I would seem practical for these four or five comrades to go down to this area for the whole time of the election campaign-October 21 to November 4th. We could probably rent a furnished appartment where all could live during that period on a very reasonable budget. Four or five full timers could put on a very effective campaign. Besides we could rally considerable forces on the week-end.

Aside from affording us an opportunity to put over our ideas on an effective basis such a campaign coming at this time could have considerable impact on those forces across the country tending towards socialist regroupment It would seem practical to insert ads in the Toronto press calling on all socialists, believers in independent political action to gather at our headquarters on Saturdays to go out by cars to participate in the campaign. The immediate results of such a campaign are problematical but their long range impact would certainly be great.

I understand the branch executive discussed this matter this afternoon and they will be presenting a unanimous report favoring our contesting this election. As I say everyone to my knowledge is in agreement that we should seize this splendid opportunity.

I offhand do not know of any objection that could be held to this proposition. However I thought that it would be good to let you know just as soon as I could so that I could make your opinion known at the coming branch meeting on Wednesday night. I would think that as soon as you received this letter and discussed the matter over the phone, a night letter which is fairly cheap would reach us in good time.(One sent on Tuesday night)

fraternally

Ross

Minutes of meeting Oct 23rd/57.

Chairman Comrade Cotton.

Minutes of previous meeting read and adopted as ammended.

Correspondence.

Kent moved that some correspondence that had been received from Vancouver, be held over and submitted to the branch for discussion in place of the internal educational. Carried.

membership & Contacts.

Adair gave a report on a West Indian student who was friendly to our ideas.

Lawrence said that some discussion with overseas students had revealed that though interested inour ideas, they did not wish to participate actively because of security reasons.

kent moved that these contacts be encouraged to move around our youth activivies only. Carried.

Wien reported an interesting contact from Sault St. Marie. and expected further discussion.

Financial Drive Report.

several comrades reported sucsess in contacting friends for assistance.

Correspondence.

Aletter was read from the Vancouver branch condemning (in the form of resolutions) the editor of our paper and asking for his removal in respect to the non appearance of the masthead on the October edition, and also an immediate review of our orientation.

A motion that Jennings read a synopsis of latest vanouver minutes carried.

Wein reported that she had received a letter from B.C. recently.

Kent stated that we were not made aware of these differences before and had only just received Comradex Briars document.

Kent reminded comrades that the masthead had been ommitted from the issue in question,because of technical reasons confronting the layout and was by no means intentional. He said that B,C. shoud not jump to such hasty conclusions.

After a long discussion, the following resolutions were presented and carri

Moved by White;

That we in the Toronto branch have confidence in the editor of Workers Vanguard . Carried Unanimously.

Moved by Langley;

That we request the Vancouver branch to withdraw the suggestion of factions to allow for full discussion. Carried.

Moved by Kent;

That we welcome the opportunity for full discussion in regard to our orientation. Carried.

Moved by Strong;

That we in the Toronto branch, deplore the use of shock type statements by the Vancouver branch,and expect discussions to be on a comradely basis. Carried.

counter to Van. motion

Kent moved that we hoist the remainder of the agenda in order that wediscuss the coming by election. Carried.

By- Election Campaign.

Kent reported on his nomination in the Hastings- Frontenac riding and spoke favourably of some press write ups and calls from friends of the branch; .

Volunteers wre listed for the paper mailing and for work in the riding on Saturday and Sunday.

The meeting adjourned at II.20.

November 29, 1957

Dear Reg;

I should not be taking up this letter at this time, I should be working on the paper each issue of which comes hard as none of our comrades are experienced writers, I should be working on the bookstore as Christmas is coming and we must clean up a little to meet pressing bills, I should be working on the accounts as it is the end of the month. You see we are really very busy. However I received the minutes of November 9th this morning

It seems to me that there is a real crisis in our relations that is being built up from week to week. And I must ask you— where are we going? What do you want?

No doubt there are many things wrong about our work, there are many corrections to be made. But I must tell you that the way we are going about it I fear is not going to lead to correction or at the very least is going to make correction very difficult.

Do you want to know what the reaction of the Toronto comrades is to all the recent hullabaloo. You can dismiss mine, as you have called for my head, but intelligent comrades interested is seriously coming to grips with the problems of the party and aiding in their solution will not be unconcerned with the reactions of the persons who must carry out the needed corrections.

Your minutes read- "Comrades noted that the relatively rapid reply and response from the Toronto branch would seem to justify our tactics in attempting to get through to them....." I am at a loss to know that there was ever any block. At anyrate you certainly got through. I must tell you you got through in a way that serves no one any purpose. You roused the indignation of everyone--the reaction was a bitter one except from two comrades--one of them it may come as a suprise-being myself. I am afraid that your criticism is so sweeping, presented in such an uncomradely [redacted], and is so loaded with charges and inneuendoes, which are so contrary to the facts as the comrades here know them, that it is extremely difficult for the most balanced, reasonable comrades to examine them. Alas you are causing some of our comrades here to blind themselves and I must say to write the entire Vancouver branch off...this of course is indeed a tragic thing.

You see Reg it does not good to "hail with pleasure the information that a digest of the Van minutes was made in the

in the Toronto branch" and to talk about getting through. The Toronto comrades from their own experiences are quite convinced that there is no block. There have been periodic reports and when there havent been it has been because there has been nothing to report. That [redacted] this is so was confirmed by the report that Jim gave to the satisfaction of everyone. No one here believes that there is any machine, bureaucracy or what you will, standing between it and information of what is going on in the movement generally.

Brian is reported as saying "that while it is true that Vancouver comrades have been delinquent in submitting articles our contributions of whatever kind are seldom used or acknowledged." Now anyone here in Toronto acquainted with the paper, just on the basis of their own experiences, rejects this, Reg. [redacted] When I heard this I had to ask myself what articles have not been used, what articles have not been ackowledged. I searched my brain and I can only think of one article that has been submitted and not been used---an obituary of a left CCFer from the north shore. I cannot think of anything else at all Reg. This item was not published...all the comrades at the editorial meeting agreed. Did I not acknowledge this article? I would be surprised to know this--although of course it is not impossible. But let me assure you that no one, not one person here is going to believe that Vancouver contributions are seldom used or acknowledged, and not because of what Ross Dowson tells them but from their own experiences.

When it is recorded in the minutes ,accepted thereby as good coin I would suppose, that the Quebec and Ontario CCF are growing and that, was it 1,000 unionists, have just joined the CCF--everyone here just laughs because Reg everyone here knows better. The Ontario CCF is going downhill. Please accept this as a fact, not what Grace MacInnis weaves about. Everthing that is coming from Vancouver is so full of barbs, sarcastic remarks, inneuendos, charges and so forth that I am afraid that they are defeating what I am sure is their very worthy purpose.

[redacted] I have said nothing about the politics of the situation. I have been doing some preliminary work on a reply to your document but unfortunately I have not been able to take it up again. Now we have this added material on the election issue of the paper. This is incredibly harsh material hardly leading to a discussion, exhange of views, very abusive. Read it and Lilian's condensation of the discussion at the Nov 9th meeting. The comrades, all the comrades worked hard on that paper, in the campaign. Now we are not a mutual admiration association, but not only is there no recognition of any of this. There is nothing but unrelieved condemnation.

I see that the branch, sight unseen, has endorsed your letter which in my opinion is unfortunate for drawing lines, consolidating support, inhibits discussion which only really started with your document submitted a month or so ago. But take a look at the discussion! Malcolm opposes the demand Stop blocking the admission of China to the UN--his argument--are we supporting participation in the UN? No one, according to the minutes, takes up this very sectarian position. Then there is the wide variation in apprechation from Bill--Taking the

the highest Marxist abstraction form to a backward electorate- to Ruth's-it is a definite Social democratic approach- to Malcolm's-a bourgeois pacifist Liberal approach. This is indeed a wide variation of opinion however the letter has been adopted as an accurate reflection of the opinion expressed here. It would seem to me from this that anything goes as far as Vancouver is concerned--give them hell, tear into them just as long as it is against-that's OK

This is the impression I have--this is certainly the impresson that the rest of the Toronto branch has by-and-large . A most unfortunate impression and one that must be counter-acted.

I cannot believe that your purpose is to create the impression that the Toronto comrades are fools and knaves, that not only do they not know anything about the principles of our movement, they know nothing about the art of politics and for good measure everyone knows more about layout of the paper and many other incidental matters than the people who are doing it. Earlier in the letter I asked Where are we going? What do you want? To my mind taking into account the reactions of the Toronto comrades to this type of campaign that you are conducting we are moving in the direction of an irreparable breach in our relations. Belive me I do not say this as a challenge or anything of that sort at all. That seems to me to be the simple logic of your course out there. If I was an ordinary short term member of the Vancouver branch I would write off Toronto root and branch. ..as I am afraid some of the Toronto comrades are writing off Vancouver What can we do to stop this? Seriously, Reg, yes seriously! There is no good talking about removing the editor---really absurd because no one here to my knowledge disagrees with the editor--nor in removing the national secretary. If any purpose could be served by doing either I would not for the slightest moment stand in the way. I would in fact be the first person to so move, Do you wish to move the paper out there--I gather this isn't practical as it would bring a rapid termination to our work in the CCF.

I really believe that your purpose and the purpose of the entire membership in Vancouver is to correct a situation that you disagree with. To belive anything else would be an absurdity. Then in my opinion it is necessary to call a halt to the sweeping abusive character of relations that are developing...both from the interests of the Vancouver branch and the Toronto branch--from the interests of building a Canadian Trotskyist movement

This letter is not to the branch but is addressed to you

fraternally

Ross

Socialist Educational League
569 Yonge St. Toronto, Ont.
December 16, 1957

The CLC
Ottawa Ont

Dear Sirs,

On Dec. 15th., at the Steelworker's hall, 35 Cecil St. a meeting on unemployment was held under the auspices of the Socialist Educational League. During this meeting of aproximatly 80 workers, with Paddy Stanton as chairman, the following resolution was passed unaminously:

To be sent to the CLC.

Whereas-Canadian labor is confronted with a deepening crisis of unemployment. And whereas-We believe that our unions are the most important fighting tool we have. Be it resolved that this meeting ask of the CLC to immediately take on the responsibility of organizing the unemployed workers.

Yours sincerely,